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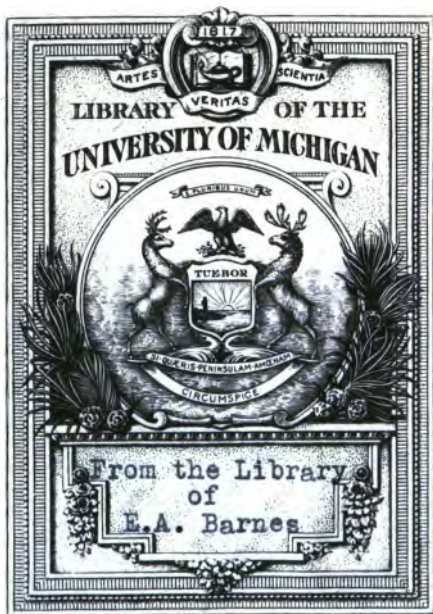
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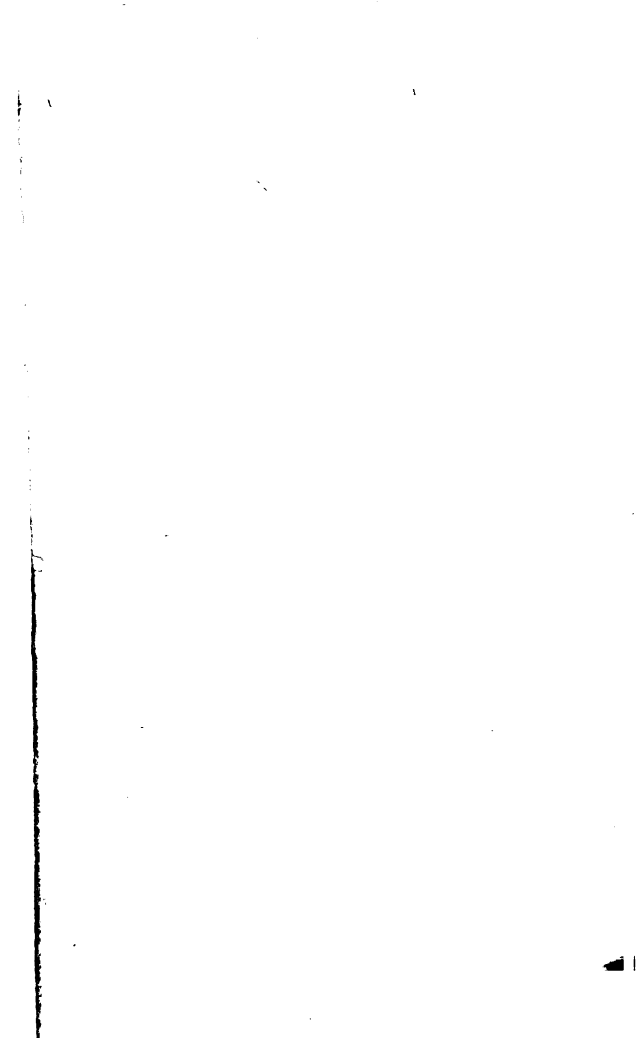
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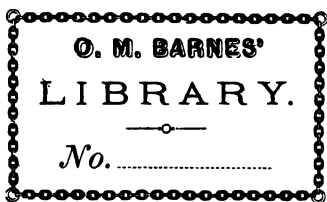




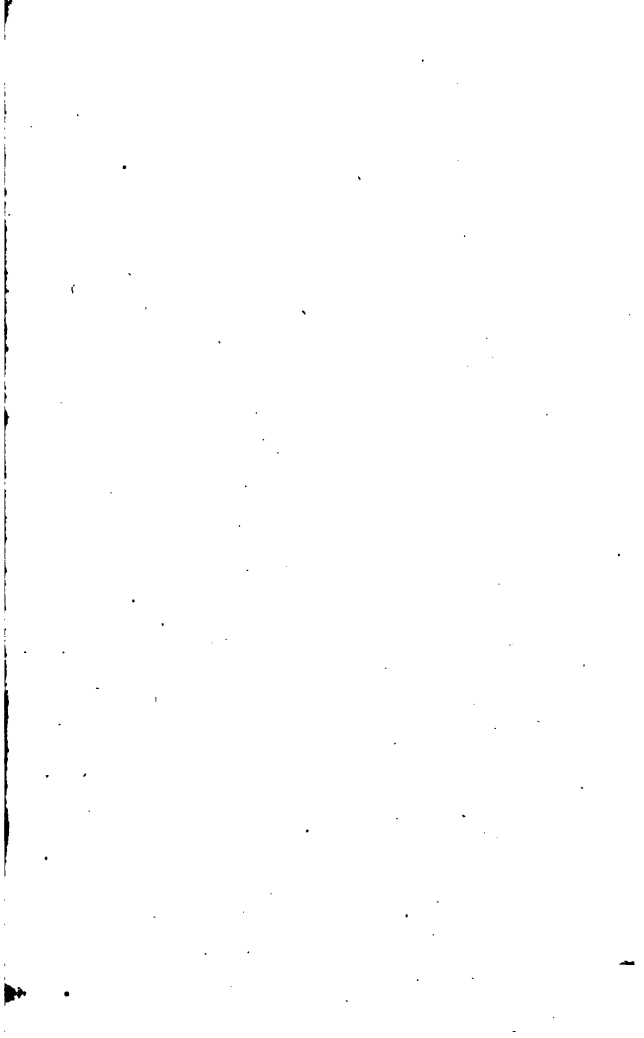




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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



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*Shakespeare, William  
The dramatic writings,*

# PROLEGOMENA

TO THE

*DRAMATICK WRITINGS*

OF

WILL. SHAKSPERE.

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Volume the First.

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—SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.

---

VIRG.

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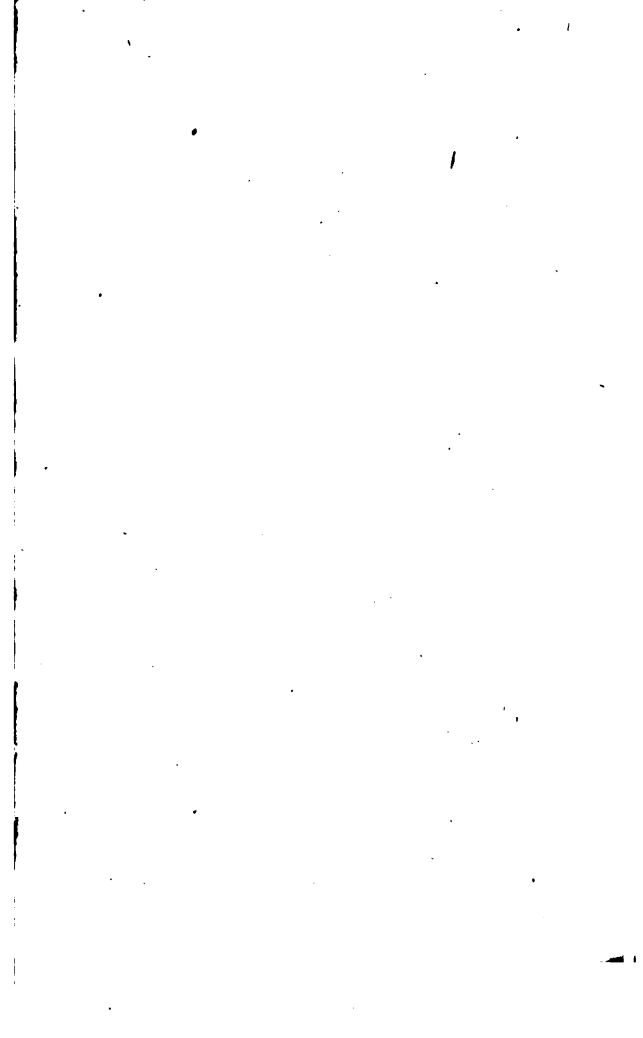
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*His Royal Highness* **GEORGE** Prince of WALES.



*If this Edition of the immortal Shakspeare possesses any merit in preference to its predecessors, it may be attributed to the influence of your illustrious patronage; on its first being offered to the world, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS was graciously pleased to countenance the undertaking, & it thence became more eminently my duty, & my zeal, to spare neither care nor expence in the execution of the work. — If I have fortunately succeeded so far as to render it in any degree worthy Your Royal attention, & approbation, I shall think myself happy being*

*Sir* YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S  
most dutiful & devoted Servant, *John Bell.*

*British Library*  
*London.*



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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AFTER the many PREFACES contained in the subsequent pages, it will be sufficient to observe, of *this Edition*, that neither pains nor expence have been spared, to render it superior to every other. In point of *exterior*, it is believed, that it hath as yet no rival, either in ornaments, printing, or paper. In respect to its contents, it will be seen, that the *Prolegomena* have been differently arranged, and considerably augmented; the *Text* given with accuracy from the best readings; and the *Annotations* not only retrenched, where futile or needless, but interspersed with a variety of new illustrations. The present Editor hath presumed to deviate from the usual mode of printing the *Author's* name, by the omission of the letter A in the last syllable, viz. SHAKSPERE for SHAKSPEARE; but he thinks himself warranted in this alteration, by the *fac simile* of the *AUTHOR's* subscription to his Will, as well as by the *invariable* custom of entering the names of his family in the *Register-Book* of the Parish of *Stratford-upon-Avon*. The ancient method of spelling the partial derivation of the name will equally justify the

## ADVERTISEMENT.

present adoption, if primitive accuracy be preferable to modern variations—as in *Spencer*, where it is written, and explained in the *Glossary*, SPERE, a spear. In the mode of printing too, he hath ventured to depart from the common mode, by rejecting the long f in favour of the round one, as being less liable to error from the occasional imperfections of the letter f, and the frequent substitution of it for the long f; the regularity of the print is by that means very much promoted, the lines having the effect of being more open, without really being at any additional distance. How far the Editor, by what he hath done, may have accomplished his object, it becomes not him to determine. He, however, awaits the Sentence of the PUBLIC, with the less apprehension, from a consciousness of the assistance with which he hath been favoured. To those Gentlemen, who have not only corrected their Notes, as printed before, but increased the obligation, by fresh communications; he begs leave to return his most grateful acknowledgments.

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# PROLEGOMENA.

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T H E

## PREFACE OF THE PLAYERS

*to their Edition in Folio, 1623.*

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To the great Variety of READERS.

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FROM the most able, to him that can but spell: there you are number'd, we had rather you were weigh'd. Especially, when the fate of all bookes depends upon your capacities; and not of your heads alone, but of your purses. Well! it is now publique, and you will stand for your priviledges, we know, to read, and censure. Doe so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a booke, the stationer saies. Then, how odde soever your braines be, or your wisdomes, make your licence the same, and spare not. Judge your sixe-pen'orth, your shillings worth, your five shillings worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the just

rates, and welcome. But, whatever you doe, buy. Censure will not drive a trade, or make the jacke goe. And though you be a magistrate of wit, and sit on the stage at Black-Friars, or the Cock-Pit, to arraigne plays dayly, know, these playes have had their triall already, and stood out all appeales; and do now come forth quitted rather by a decree of court, than any purchas'd letters of commendation.

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have been wished, that the author himself had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envy his friends, the office of their care and paine, to have collected and published them; and so to have published them, as where (before) you were abused with divers stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors, that exposed them: even those are now offered to your view cured, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happy imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His minde and hand went together: and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our province who onely gather his workes, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid,



hid, than it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: and if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his friends, who, if you need, can be your guides: if you need them not, you can leade yourselves, and others. And such readers we wish him.

JOHN HEMINGE.  
HENRIE CONDELL.

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*MR. POPE's*  
**P R E F A C E.**

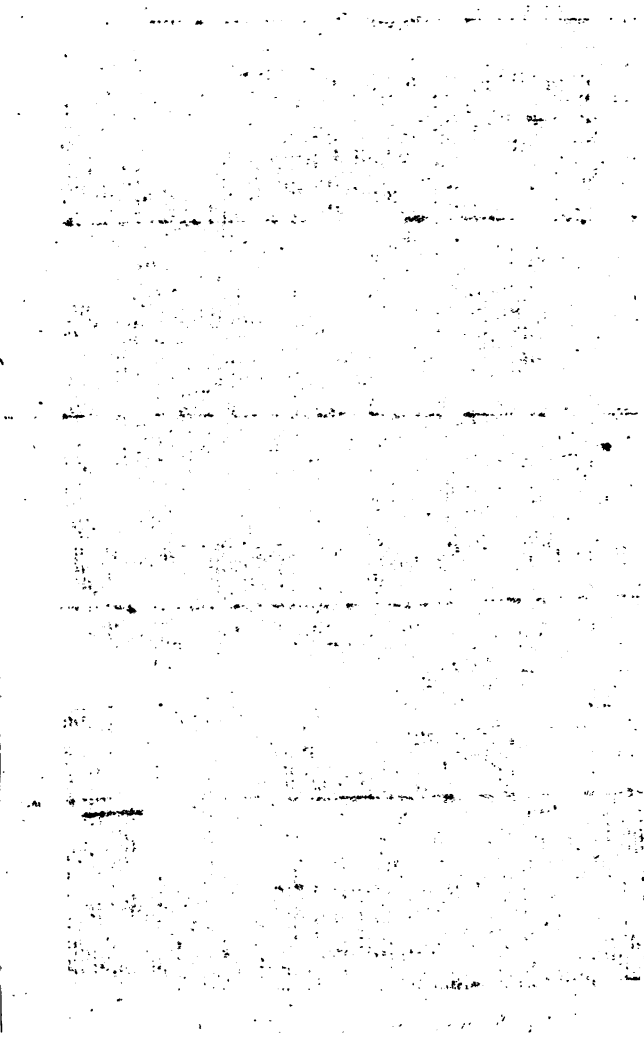
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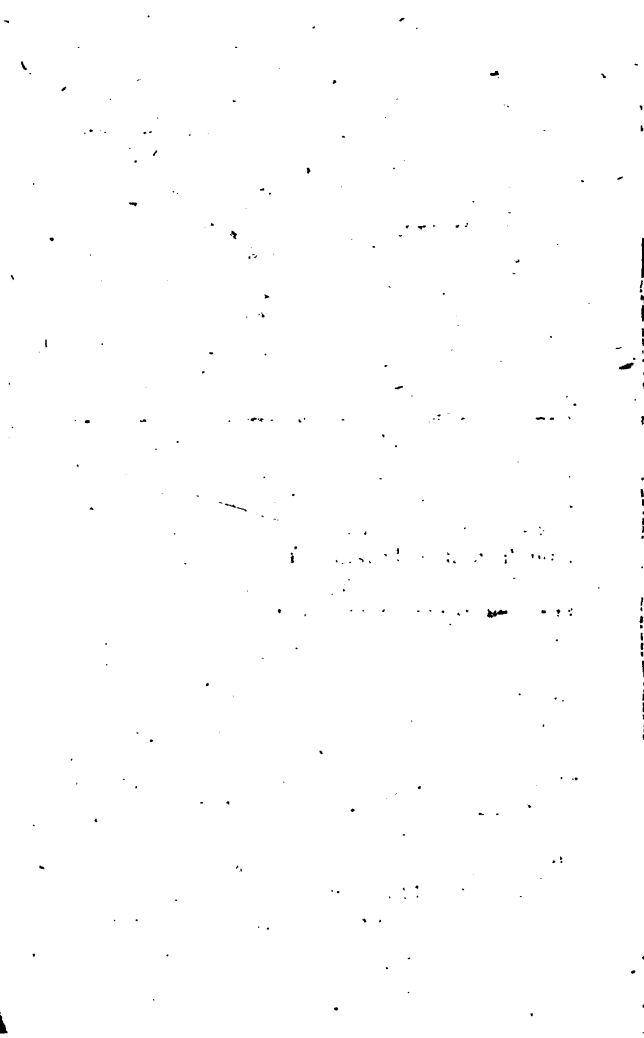


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**I**T is not my design to enter into a criticism upon this author: though to do it effectually, and not superficially, would be the best occasion that any just writer could take, to form the judgment and taste of our nation. For of all English poets Shakspeare must be confessed to be the fairest and fullest subject for criticism, and to afford the most numerous, as well as most conspicuous instances, both of beauties and faults of all sorts. But this far exceeds the bounds of a preface, the business of which is only to give an account of the fate of his works, and the disadvantages under which they have been transmitted to us. We shall hereby extenuate many faults which are his, and clear him from the imputation of many which are not: a design, which, though it can be no guide to future criticks to do him justice in one way, will at least be sufficient to prevent their doing him an injustice in the other.

I cannot however but mention some of his principal and characteristick excellencies, for which (notwithstanding his defects) he is justly and universally elevated above all other dramattick writers. Not that  
this







Engraved by J. Smith

ALEXANDER POPE ESQ

1729



this is the proper place of praising him, but because I would not omit any occasion of doing it.

If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakspere. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature ; it proceeded through Ægyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakspere was inspiration indeed : he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument, of nature ; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

His *characters* are so much nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shews that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image : each picture, like a mock-rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakspere is as much an individual, as those in life itself ; it is as impossible to find any two alike ; and such, as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it ; which is such throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker.

The *power* over our *passions* was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances. Yet all along there is seen no labour, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide our guess to the effect, or be perceived to lead toward it: but the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places: we are surprised the moment we weep; and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it again, that the passions directly opposite to these, laughter and spleen, are no less at his command; that he is not more a master of the *great* than of the *ridiculous* in human nature; of our noblest tendernesses, than of our vainest foibles; of our strongest emotions, than of our idlest sensations!

Nor does he only excel in the passions; in the coolness of reflection and reasoning he is full as admirable. His *sentiments* are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject; but, by a talent very peculiar, something between penetration and felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and publick scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts: so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground  
for



for a very new opinion, that the philosopher, and even the man of the world, may be *born*, as well as the poet.

It must be owned, that with all these great excellencies, he has almost as great defects; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from several causes and accidents; without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlightened a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. That all these contingencies should unite to his disadvantage seems to me almost as singularly unlucky, as that so many various (nay contrary) talents should meet in one man, was happy and extraordinary.

It must be allowed that stage-poetry, of all other, is more particularly levelled to please the populace, and its success more immediately depending upon the *common suffrage*. One cannot therefore wonder, if Shakspeare, having at his first appearance no other aim in his writings than to procure a subsistence, directed his endeavours solely to hit the taste and humour that then prevailed. The audience was generally composed of the meaner sort of people; and therefore the images of life were to be drawn from those of their own rank: accordingly we find, that not our author's only, but almost all the old comedies have their scene among *tradesmen* and *mechanicks*: and even their historical plays strictly follow the common *old stories* or *vulgar traditions* of that kind of people. In  
tragedy,

tragedy, nothing was so sure to *surprize* and cause *admiration*, as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural, events and incidents; the most exaggerated thoughts; the most verbose and bombast expression; the most pompous rhymes, and thundering versification. In comedy, nothing was so sure to *please*, as mean buffoonry, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jest of fools and clowns. Yet even in these our author's wit buoys up, and is borne above his subject: his genius in those low parts is like some prince of a romance in the disguise of a shepherd or peasant; a certain greatness and spirit now and then break out, which manifest his higher extraction and qualities.

It may be added, that not only the common audience had no notion of the rules of writing, but few even of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way; till Ben Jonson, getting possession of the stage, brought critical learning into vogue: and that this was not done without difficulty, may appear from those frequent lessons (and indeed almost declamations) which he was forced to prefix to his first plays, and put into the mouth of his actors, the *grex*, *chorus*, &c. to remove the prejudices, and inform the judgment of his hearers. Till then, our authors had no thoughts of writing on the model of the ancients: their tragedies were only histories in dialogue; and their comedies followed the thread of any novel as they found it, no less implicitly than if it had been true history.

To judge therefore of Shakspeare by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one country; who acted under those of another. He writ to the *people*; and writ at first without patronage from the better sort; and therefore without aims of pleasing them; without assistance or advice from the learned; as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them; without that knowledge of the best models, the ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them; in a word, without any views of reputation, and of what poets are pleased to call immortality; some or all of which have encouraged the vanity, or animated the ambition, of other writers.

Yet it must be observed, that when his performances had merited the protection of his prince, and when the encouragement of the court had succeeded to that of the town, the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former. The dates of his plays sufficiently evidence that his productions improved in proportion to the respect he had for his auditors. And I make no doubt this observation would be found true in every instance, were but editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the town, or the court.

Another cause (and no less strong than the former) may be deduced from our author's being a *player*, and forming himself first upon the judgments of that body of men whereof he was a member. They have ever had a standard to themselves, upon other principles  
than

than those of Aristotle. As they live by the majority, they know no rule but that of pleasing the present humour, and complying with the wit in fashion; a consideration which brings all their judgment to a short point. Players are just such judges of what is *right*, as tailors are of what is *graceful*. And in this view it will be but fair to allow, that most of our author's faults are less to be ascribed to his wrong judgment as a poet, than to his right judgment as a player.

By these men it was thought a praise to Shakspeare, that he scarce ever *blotted a line*. This they industriously propagated, as appears from what we are told by Ben Jonson in his *Discoveries*, and from the preface of *Heminge and Condell* to the first folio edition. But in reality (however it has prevailed) there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which there are more undeniable evidences: as, the comedy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he entirely new writ; *The History of Henry the Sixth*, which was first published under the title of *The Contention of York and Lancaster*; and that of *Henry the Fifth*, extremely improved; that of *Hamlet*, enlarged to almost as much again as at first; and many others. I believe the common opinion of his want of learning proceeded from no better ground. This too might be thought a praise by some; and to this his errors have as injudiciously been ascribed by others. For it is certain, were it true, it could concern but a small part of them; the most are such as are not properly defects, but superfections and arise not from want of learning or reading,

reading, but from want of thinking or judging : or rather (to be more just to our author) from a compliance to those wants in others. As to a wrong choice of the subject, a wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forced expressions, &c. if these are not to be ascribed to the aforesaid accidental reasons, they must be charged upon the poet himself, and there is no help for it. But I think the two disadvantages which I have mentioned (to be obliged to please the lowest of the people, and to keep the worst of company), if the consideration be extended as far as it reasonably may, will appear sufficient to mislead and depress the greatest genius upon earth. Nay, the more modesty with which such a one is endued, the more he is in danger of submitting and conforming to others, against his own better judgment.

But as to his *want of learning*, it may be necessary to say something more : there is certainly a vast difference between *learning* and *languages*. How far he was ignorant of the latter, I cannot determine ; but it is plain he had much reading at least, if they will not call it learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has knowledge, whether he has it from one language or from another. Nothing is more evident than that he had a taste of natural philosophy, mechanicks, ancient and modern history, poetical learning, and mythology : we find him very knowing in the customs, rites, and manners of antiquity. In *Coriolanus*, and *Julius Cæsar*, not only the spirit, but manners of the Romans are exactly drawn ; and still a nicer distinction

is shewn between the manners of the Romans in the time of the former, and of the latter. His reading in the ancient historians is no less conspicuous, in many references to particular passages: and the speeches copied from Plutarch in *Coriolanus* may, I think, as well be made an instance of his learning, as those copied from Cicero in *Catiline*, of Ben Jonson's. The manners of other nations in general, the Egyptians, Venetians, French, &c. are drawn with equal propriety. Whatever object of nature, or branch of science, he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive knowledge: his descriptions are still exact; all his metaphors appropriated, and remarkably drawn from the true nature and inherent qualities of each subject. When he treats of ethick or politick, we may constantly observe a wonderful justness of distinction, as well as extent of comprehension. No one is more a master of the poetical story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it: Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shewn more learning this way than Shakspeare. We have translations from *Ovid* published in his name, among those poems which pass for his, and for some of which we have undoubted authority (being published by himself, and dedicated to his noble patron the earl of Southampton): he appears also to have been conversant in *Plautus*, from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays: he follows the Greek authors, and particularly Dares Phrygius, in another (although I will  
not

not pretend to say in what language he read them). The modern Italian writers of *novels* he was manifestly acquainted with; and we may conclude him to be no less conversant with the ancients of his own country, from the use he has made of Chaucer in *Troilus and Cressida*, and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, if that play be his, as there goes a tradition it was (and indeed it has little resemblance of Fletcher, and more of our author than some of those which have been received as genuine).

I am inclined to think this opinion proceeded originally from the zeal of the partizans of our author and Ben Jonson: as they endeavoured to exalt the one at the expence of the other. It is ever the nature of parties to be in extremes; and nothing is so probable, as that, because Ben Jonson had much the more learning, it was said on the one hand that Shakspeare had none at all; and because Shakspeare had much the most wit and fancy, it was retorted on the other, that Jonson wanted both. Because Shakspeare borrowed nothing, it was said that Ben Jonson borrowed every thing. Because Jonson did not write extempore, he was reproached with being a year about every piece; and because Shakspeare wrote with ease and rapidity, they cried, he never once made a blot. Nay, the spirit of opposition ran so high, that whatever those of the one side objected to the other, was taken at the rebound, and turned into praises; as injudiciously, as their antagonists before had made them objections.

Poets are always afraid of envy ; but sure they have as much reason to be afraid of admiration. They are the Scylla and Charybdis of authors ; those who escape one, often fall by the other. *Pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes*, says Tacitus : and Virgil desires to wear a charm against those who praise a poet without rule or reason ;

—— *Si ultra placitum laudârit baccâre frontem*  
*Cingito, ne vati noceat*——

But however this contention might be carried on by the partizans on either side, I cannot help thinking these two great poets were good friends, and lived on amicable terms, and in offices of society with each other. It is an acknowledged fact, that Ben Jonson was introduced upon the stage, and his first works encouraged, by Shakspeare ; and after his death, that author writes, *To the memory of his beloved Mr. William Shakspeare* ; which shews as if the friendship had continued through life. I cannot for my own part find any thing *invidious* or *sparing* in those verses, but wonder Mr. Dryden was of that opinion. He exalts him not only above all his contemporaries, but above Chaucer and Spenser, whom he will not allow to be great enough to be ranked with him ; and challenges the names of Sophocles, Euripides, and Æschylus, nay all Greece and Rome at once, to equal him ; and (which is very particular) expressly vindicates him from the imputation of wanting *art*, not enduring that all his excellencies should be attributed



attributed to *nature*. It is remarkable too, that the praise he gives him in his *Discoveries* seems to proceed from a *personal kindness*; he tells us, that he loved the man, as well as honoured his memory; celebrates the honesty, openness, and frankness of his temper; and only distinguishes, as he reasonably ought, between the real merit of the author, and the silly and derogatory applauses of the players. Ben Jonson might indeed be sparing in his commendations (though certainly he is not so in this instance), partly from his own nature, and partly from judgment. For men of judgment think they do any man more service in praising him justly, than lavishly. I say, I would fain believe they were friends, though the violence and ill-breeding of their followers and flatterers, were enough to give rise to the contrary report. I hope that it may be with *parties*, both in wit and state, as with those monsters described by the poets; and that their *heads* at least may have something human, though their *bodies* and *tails* are wild beasts and serpents.

As I believe that what I have mentioned gave rise to the opinion of Shakspeare's want of learning; so what has continued it down to us may have been the many blunders and illiteracies of the first publishers of his works. In these editions their ignorance shines in almost every page; nothing is more common than *Actus tertia. Exit omnes. Enter three Witches solus\**.

\* *Enter three witches solus.*] This blunder appears to be of Mr. Pope's own invention. It is not to be found in any one of the four folio copies of *Macbeth*; and there is no quarto edition of it extant.

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Their French is as bad as their Latin, both in construction and spelling: their very Welsh is false. Nothing is more likely than that those palpable blunders of Heſtor's quoting Aristotle, with others of that gross kind, sprung from the same root: it not being at all credible that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least conversation with such as had. Ben Jonson (whom they will not think partial to him) allows him at least to have had *some* Latin; which is utterly inconsistent with mistakes like these. Nay, the constant blunders in proper names of persons and places are such as must have proceeded from a man, who had not so much as read any history in any language: so could not be Shakspere's.

I shall now lay before the reader some of those almost innumerable errors, which have risen from one source, the ignorance of the players, both as his actors, and as his editors. When the nature and kinds of these are enumerated and considered, I dare to say that not Shakspere only, but Aristotle or Cicero, had their works undergone the same fate, might have appeared to want sense as well as learning.

It is not certain that any one of his plays was published by himself. During the time of his employment in the theatre, several of his pieces were printed separately in quarto. What makes me think that most of these were not published by him, is the excessive carelessness of the press: every page is so scandalously false spelled, and almost all the learned or unusual words

words so intolerably mangled, that it is plain there either was no corrector to the press at all, or one totally illiterate. If any were supervised by himself, I should fancy *The Two Parts of Henry the Fourth*, and *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, might have been so, because I find no other printed with any exactness; and (contrary to the rest) there is very little variation in all the subsequent editions of them. There are extant two prefaces to the first quarto edition of *Troilus and Cressida* in 1609, and to that of *Othello*; by which it appears, that the first was published without his knowledge or consent, or even before it was acted, so late as seven or eight years before he died: and that the latter was not printed till after his death. The whole number of genuine plays, which we have been able to find printed in his life-time, amounts but to eleven. And of some of these we meet with two or more editions by different printers, each of which has whole heaps of trash different from the other: which I should fancy was occasioned by their being taken from different copies belonging to different play-houses.

The folio edition (in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected) was published by two players, Heminge and Condell, in 1623, seven years after his decease. They declare, that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious, and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other; for in all respects else it is far worse than the quartos.

First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages

passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added, since those quartos, by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes that *those who play the clowns would speak no more than is set down for them.* (Act iii. Sc. 4.) But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and Juliet* there is no hint of a great number of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others, the low scenes of mobs, plebejans, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present: and I have seen one in particular (which seems to have belonged to the play-house, by having the parts divided with lines, and the actors names in the margin), where several of those very passages were added in a written hand, which are since to be found in the folio.

In the next place, a number of beautiful passages, which are extant in the first single editions, are omitted in this; as it seems, without any other reason, than their willingness to shorten some scenes: these men (as it was said of Procrustes) either lopping, or stretching an author, to make him just fit for their stage.

This edition is said to be printed from the *original copies*; I believe they meant those which had lain ever since the author's days in the play-house, and had from time to time been cut, or added to, arbitrarily. It appears that this edition, as well as the quartos, was printed (at least partly) from no better copies than the

*prompter's*

*prompter's book*, or *piece-meal parts* written out for the use of the actors: for in some places their very \* names are through carelessness set down instead of the *Personæ Dramatis*; and in others the notes of direction to the *property-men* for their *moveables*, and to the *players* for their *entries*, are inserted into the text through the ignorance of the transcribers.

The plays not having been before so much as distinguished by *Acts* and *Scenes*, they are in this edition divided according as they played them; often when there is no pause in the action, or where they thought fit to make a breach in it, for the sake of musick, masques, or monsters.

Sometimes the scenes are transposed and shuffled backward and forward; a thing which could no otherwise happen, but by their being taken from separate and piece-meal written parts.

Many verses are omitted entirely, and others transposed: from whence invincible obscurities have arisen, past the guess of any commentator to clear up, but just where the accidental glimpse of an old edition enlightens us.

Some characters were confounded and mixed, or two put into one, for want of a competent number of actors. Thus in the quarto edition of *Midsummer-*

\* *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act ii. Enter Prince Leonato, Claudio, and Jack Wilson, instead of Balthasar. And in Act iv. Cowley and Kemp constantly through a whole scene.  
Edit. fol. of 1623, and 1632.

*Night's Dream*, Act v. Shakspeare introduces a kind of master of the revels called *Philostrate*; all whose part is given to another character (that of *Egeus*) in the subsequent editions: so also in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. This too makes it probable that the prompter's books were what they called the original copies.

From liberties of this kind, many speeches also were put into the mouths of wrong persons, where the author now seems chargeable with making them speak out of character: or, sometimes, perhaps, for no better reason than that a governing player, to have the mouthing of some favourite speech himself, would snatch it from the unworthy lips of an underling.

Prose from verse they did not know, and they accordingly printed one for the other throughout the volume.

Having been forced to say so much of the players, I think I ought in justice to remark, that the judgment, as well as condition, of that class of people, was then far inferior to what it is in our days. As then the best play-houses were inns and taverns (the Globe, the Swan, the Red-Bull, the Fortune, &c.), so the top of the profession were then mere players, not gentlemen of the stage: they were led into the buttery by the steward, not placed at the lord's table, or lady's toilette; and consequently were entirely deprived of those advantages they now enjoy in the familiar conversation of our nobility, and an intimacy (not to say dearness) with people of the first condition.

From what has been said, there can be no question but

but had Shakspeare published his works himself (especially in his latter time, and after his retreat from the stage), we should not only be certain which are genuine, but should find, in those that are, the errors lessened by some thousands. If I may judge from all the distinguishing marks of his style, and his manner of thinking and writing, I make no doubt to declare, that those wretched plays, *Pericles*, *Lochrine*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Yorkshire Tragedy*, *Lord Cromwell*, *The Puritan*, and *London Prodigal*, cannot be admitted as his. And I should conjecture of some of the others (particularly *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Titus Andronicus*) that only some characters, single scenes, or perhaps a few particular passages, were of his hand. It is very probable what occasioned some plays to be supposed Shakspeare's was only this; that they were pieces produced by unknown authors, or fitted up for the theatre while it was under his administration; and no owner claiming them, they were adjudged to him, as they give strays to the lord of the manor: a mistake which (one may also observe) it was not for the interest of the house to remove. Ye, the players themselves, Heminge and Condell, afterwards did Shakspeare the justice to reject those eight plays in their edition; though they were then printed in his name, in every body's hands, and acted with some applause (as we learn from what Ben Jonson says of *Pericles* in his ode on the *New-Inn*. That *Titus Andronicus* is one of this class, I am the rather induced to believe, by finding the same author openly express his contempt

contempt of it in the *induction* to *Bartholomew-Fair*, in the year 1614, when Shakspeare was yet living. And there is no better authority for these latter sort, than for the former, which were equally published in his life-time.

If we give into this opinion, how many low and vicious parts and passages might no longer reflect upon this great genius, but appear unworthily charged upon him? And even in those which are really his, how many faults may have been unjustly laid to his account from arbitrary additions, expunctions, transpositions of scenes and lines, confusion of characters and persons, wrong application of speeches, corruptions of innumerable passages by the ignorance and wrong corrections of them again by the impertinence of his first editors? From one or other of these considerations, I am verily persuaded, that the greatest and the grossest part of what are thought his errors would vanish, and leave his character in a light very different from that disadvantageous one in which it now appears to us.

This is the state in which Shakspeare's writings lie at present; for, since the above-mentioned folio edition, all the rest have implicitly followed it, without having recourse to any of the former, or ever making the comparison between them. It is impossible to repair the injuries already done him; too much time has elapsed, and the materials are too few. In what I have done, I have rather given a proof of my willingness and desire, than of my ability, to do him justice. I have discharged the dull duty of an editor, to my best



best judgment, with more labour than I expect thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense or conjecture. The method taken in this edition will shew itself. The various readings are fairly put in the margin, so that every one may compare them; and those I have preferred into the text are constantly *ex fide codicum*, upon authority. The alterations or additions, which Shakspeare himself made, are taken notice of as they occur. Some suspected passages, which are excessively bad (and which seem interpolations, by being so inserted, that one can entirely omit them without any chasm or deficiency in the context), are degraded to the bottom of the page; with an asterisk referring to the places of their insertion. The scenes are marked so distinctly, that every removal of place is specified; which is more necessary in this author than any other, since he shifts them more frequently; and sometimes, without attending to this particular, the reader would have met with obscurities. The more obsolete or unusual words are explained. Some of the most shining passages are distinguished by commas in the margin; and where the beauty lay not in particulars, but in the whole, a star is prefixed to the scene. This seems to me a shorter and less ostentatious method of performing the better half of criticism (namely the pointing out an author's excellencies) than to fill a whole paper with citations of fine passages, with *general applauses*, or *empty exclamations* at the tail of them. There is also subjoined a catalogue of those first editions, by which

the greater part of the various readings, and of the corrected passages are authorized (most of which are such as carry their own evidence along with them). These editions now hold the place of originals, and are the only materials left to repair the deficiencies, or restore the corrupted sense of the author: I can only wish that a greater number of them (if a greater were ever published) may yet be found, by a search more successful than mine, for the better accomplishment of this end.

I will conclude by saying of Shakspeare, that with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his *drama*, one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestick piece of *Gothick* architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allowed, that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; though we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though many of the parts are childish, ill-placed, and unequal to its grandeur.

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MR. THEOBALD'S

\* P R E F A C E.

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THE attempt to write upon SHAKSPERE is like going into a large, a spacious, and a splendid dome, through the conveyance of a narrow and obscure entry. A glare of light suddenly breaks upon you beyond what the avenue at first promised; and a thousand beauties of genius and character, like so many gaudy apartments pouring at once upon the eye, diffuse and throw themselves out to the mind. The prospect is too wide to come within the compass of a single view: it is a gay confusion of pleasing objects, too various to be enjoyed but in a general admiration: and they must be separated, and eyed distinctly, in order to give the proper entertainment.

And as, in great piles of building, some parts are often finished up to hit the taste of the *connoisseur*;

\* This is Mr. Theobald's preface to his second edition in 1740, and had been much curtailed by himself after its first appearance before the impression in 1733. STEEVENS.

others more negligently put together, to strike the fancy of a common and unlearned beholder ; some parts are made stupendously magnificent and grand, to surprise with the vast design and execution of the architect ; others are contracted, to amuse you with his neatness and elegance in little : so, in Shakspeare, we may find *traits* that will stand the test of the severest judgment ; and strokes as carelessly hit off, to the level of the more ordinary capacities ; some descriptions raised to that pitch of grandeur, as to astonish you with the compass and elevation of his thought ; and others copying nature within so narrow, so confined a circle, as if the author's talent lay only at drawing in miniature.

In how many points of light must we be obliged to gaze at this great poet ! In how many branches of excellence to consider and admire him ! Whether we view him on the side of art or nature, he ought equally to engage our attention : whether we respect the force and greatness of his genius, the extent of his knowledge and reading, the power and address with which he throws out and applies either nature or learning, there is ample scope both for our wonder and pleasure. If his diction, and the clothing of his thoughts attract us, how much more must we be charmed with the richness and variety of his images and ideas ! If his images and ideas steal into our souls, and strike upon our fancy, how much are they improved in price, when we come to reflect with what propriety and justice they are applied to character ! If we look into his characters,  
and

and how they are furnished and proportioned to the employment he cuts out for them, how are we taken up with the mastery of his portraits! What draughts of nature! What variety of originals, and how differing each from the other! How are they dressed from the stores of his own luxurious imagination; without being the apes of mode, or borrowing from any foreign wardrobe! Each of them are the standards of fashion for themselves: like gentlemen that are above the direction of their tailors, and can adorn themselves without the aid of imitation. If other poets draw more than one fool or coxcomb, there is the same resemblance in them, as in that painter's draughts who was happy only at forming a rose; you find them all younger brothers of the same family, and all of them have a pretence to give the same crest: but Shakspeare's clowns and fops come all of a different house; they are no farther allied to one another than as man to man, members of the same species; but as different in features and lineaments of character, as we are from one another in face or complexion. But I am unawares launching into his character as a writer, before I have said what I intended of him as a private member of the republick.

Mr. Rowe has very justly observed, that people are fond of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity; and that the common accidents of their lives naturally become the subject of our critical inquiries: that however trifling such a curiosity at the first view may appear, yet, as for what relates to men

of letters, the knowledge of an author may, perhaps, sometimes conduce to the better understanding his works; and, indeed, this author's works, from the bad treatment he has met with from copyists and editors, have so long wanted a comment, that one would zealously embrace every method of information that could contribute to recover them from the injuries with which they have so long lain overwhelmed.

It is certain, that if we have first admired the man in his writings, his case is so circumstanced, that we must naturally admire the writings in the man: that if we go back to take a view of his education, and the employment in life which fortune had cut out for him, we shall retain the stronger ideas of his extensive genius.

His father, we are told, was a considerable dealer in wool; but having no fewer than ten children, of whom our Shakspeare was the eldest, the best education he could afford him was no better than to qualify him for his own business and employment. I cannot affirm with any certainty how long his father lived; but I take him to be the same Mr. John Shakspeare who was living in the year 1599, and who then, in honour of his son, took out an extract of his family-arms from the herald's office; by which it appears, that he had been officer and bailiff of Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire; and that he enjoyed some hereditary lands and tenements, the reward of his great grandfather's faithful and approved service to king Henry VII.

Be this as it will, our Shakspeare, it seems, was bred for some time at a free-school; the very free-school, I presume, founded at Stratford: where, we are told, he acquired what Latin he was master of: but that his father being obliged, through narrowness of circumstance, to withdraw him too soon from thence, he was thereby unhappily prevented from making any proficiency in the dead languages; a point that will deserve some little discussion in the sequel of this dissertation.

How long he continued in his father's way of business, either as an assistant to him, or on his own proper account, no notices are left to inform us: nor have I been able to learn precisely at what period of life he quitted his native Stratford, and began his acquaintance with London and the *stage*.

In order to settle in the world after a family-manner, he thought fit, Mr. Rowe acquaints us, to marry while he was yet very young. It is certain, he did so: for by the monument in Stratford-church, erected to the memory of his daughter Susanna, the wife of John Hall, gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d of July, in the year 1649, aged 66. So that she was born in 1583, when her father could not be full 19 years old; who was himself born in the year 1564. Nor was she his eldest child, for he had another daughter, Judith, who was born before her\*, and who was

\* This is a mistake. Susanna was the poet's eldest daughter. See the extracts from the register-book of the parish of Stratford, in one of the following pages. STEEVENS.

married to one Mr. Thomas Quiney. So that Shakspeare must have entered into wedlock by that time he was turned of seventeen years.

Whether the force of inclination merely, or some concurring circumstances of convenience in the match, prompted him to marry so early, is not easy to be determined at this distance ; but, it is probable, a view of interest might partly sway his conduct in this point : for he married the daughter of one Hathaway, a substantial yeoman in his neighbourhood, and she had the start of him in age no less than eight years. She survived him, notwithstanding, seven seasons, and died that very year in which the *players* published the first edition of his works in *folio*, Anno Dom. 1623, at the age of 67 years, as we likewise learn from her monument in Stratford church.

How long he continued in this kind of settlement; upon his own native spot, is not more easily to be determined. But if the tradition be true, of that extravagance which forced him both to quit his country and way of living, to wit, his being engaged, with a knot of young deer-stealers, to rob the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Cherlecot, near Stratford, the enterprize savours so much of youth and levity, we may reasonably suppose it was before he could write full man. Besides, considering he has left us six-and-thirty plays at least, avowed to be genuine ; and considering too that he had retired from the stage, to spend the latter part of his days at his own native Stratford ; the interval of time necessarily required for the finishing so many



many dramattick pieces, obliges us to suppose he threw himself very early upon the play-house. And as he could, probably, contract no acquaintance with the drama, while he was driving on the affair of wool at home; some time must be lost, even after he had commenced player, before he could attain knowledge enough in the science to qualify himself for turning author.

It has been observed by Mr. Rowe, that, amongst other extravagances, which our author has given to his Sir John Falstaff, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he has made him a deer-stealer; and, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor, under the name of Justice Shallow, he has given him very near the same coat of arms, which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there. There are two coats, I observe, in Dugdale, where three silver fishes are borne in the name of Lucy; and another coat, to the monument of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir William Lucy, in which are quartered, in four several divisions, twelve little fishes, three in each division, probably *Luces*. This very coat, indeed, seems alluded to in Shallow's giving the dozen white *Luces*, and in Slender saying *he may quarter*. When I consider the exceeding candour and good-nature of our author (which inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him); and that he should throw this humourous piece of satire at his prosecutor,

at

at least twenty years after the provocation given; I am confidently persuaded it must be owing to an unforgiving rancour on the prosecutor's side: and, if this was the case, it were pity but the disgrace of such an inveteracy should remain as a lasting reproach, and Shallow stand as a mark of ridicule to stigmatize his malice.

It is said, our author spent some years before his death in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends, at his native Stratford. I could never pick up any certain intelligence, when he relinquished the stage. I know, it has been mistakenly thought by some, that Spenser's *Thalia*, in his *Tears of his Muses*, where she laments the loss of her Willy in the comick scene, has been applied to our author's quitting the stage. But Spenser himself, it is well known, quitted the stage of life in the year 1598; and, five years after this, we find Shakspeare's name among the actors in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, which first made its appearance in the year 1603. Nor, surely, could he then have any thoughts of retiring, since that very year a licence under the privy-seal was granted by K. James I. to him and Fletcher, Burbage, Phillippes, Heminge, Condell, &c. authorizing them to exercise the art of playing comedies, tragedies, &c. as well at their usual house called *The Globe*, on the other side of the water, as in any other parts of the kingdom, during his majesty's pleasure (a copy of which licence is preserved in *Rymer's Fadera*). Again, it is certain, that Shakspeare did not exhibit his *Macbeth* till after the Union was brought about, and till after K. James I. had begun

begun to touch for the *evil*: for, it is plain, he has inserted compliments, on both those accounts, upon his royal master in that tragedy. Nor, indeed, could the number of the dramattick pieces, he produced, admit of his retiring near so early as that period. So that what Spenser there says, if it relate at all to Shakspeare, must hint at some occasional recess he made for a time upon a disgust taken: or the Willy, there mentioned, must relate to some other favourite poet. I believe, we may safely determine, that he had not quitted in the year 1610. For, in his *Tempest*, our author makes mention of the Bermuda islands, which were unknown to the English, till, in 1609, Sir John Summers made a voyage to North-America, and discovered them, and afterwards invited some of his countrymen to settle a plantation there. That he became the private gentleman, at least three years before his decease, is pretty obvious from another circumstance: I mean, from that remarkable and well-known story, which Mr. Rowe has given us of our author's intimacy with Mr. John Combe, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury; and upon whom Shakspeare made the following facetious epitaph:

*Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd,*

*'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd;*

*If any man ask, who lies in this tomb,*

*Oh! oh! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.*

This sarcastical piece of wit was, at the gentleman's own request, thrown out extemporally in his company. And this Mr. John Combe I take to be the same, who, by Dugdale in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, is said to have died in the year 1614 \*, and for whom, at the upper end of the choir of the Guild of the Holy Cross at Stratford, a fair monument is erected, having a statue thereon cut in alabaster, and in a gown, with this epitaph. "Here lieth interred the body of John Combe, esq. who died the 10th of July, 1614, who bequeathed several annual charities to the parish of Stratford, and 100l. to be lent to fifteen poor tradesmen from three years to three years, changing the parties every third year, at the rate of fifty shillings *per annum*, the increase to be distributed to the alms-poor there."—The donation has all the air of a rich and sagacious usurer.

Shakspeare himself did not survive Mr. Combe long, for he died in the year 1616, the 53d of his age. He lies buried on the north side of the chancel in the great church at Stratford; where a monument, decent enough for the time, is erected to him, and placed against the wall. He is represented under an arch in a sitting posture, a cushion spread before him, with a pen in his right hand, and his left rested on a scrawl of

\* By Mr. Combe's Will, which is now in the Prerogative-Office in London, Shakspeare had a legacy of five pounds bequeathed to him. The Will is without any date.

paper.

paper. The Latin distich, which is placed under the cushion, has been given us by Mr. Pope, or his graver, in this manner :

*INGENIO Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,  
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.*

I confess, I do not conceive the difference betwixt *ingenio* and *genio* in the first verse. They seem to me entirely synonymous terms ; nor was the Pylian sage, Nestor, celebrated for his ingenuity, but for an experience and judgment owing to his long age. Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, has copied this distich with a distinction which Mr. Rowe has followed, and which certainly restores us the true meaning of the epitaph :

*JUDICIO Pylium, genio Socratem\*, &c.*

In

\* The first syllable in *Socratem* is here made short, which cannot be allowed. Perhaps we should read *Sophoclem*. Shakspeare is then appositely compared with a dramatick author among the ancients: but still it should be remembered that the elogium is lessened while the metre is reformed ; and it is well known that some of our early writers of Latin poetry were uncommonly negligent in their prosody, especially in proper names. The thought of this distich, as Mr. Tollet observes, might have been taken from the Fairy Queene of Spenser, b. ii. c. 9. st. 48, and c. 10. st. 3.

D

To

In 1614, the greatest part of the town of Stratford was consumed by fire; but our Shakspeare's house, among some others, escaped the flames. This house was first built by Sir Hugh Clopton, a younger brother of an ancient family in that neighbourhood, who took their name from the manor of Clopton. Sir Hugh was Sheriff of London in the reign of Richard III. and lord-mayor in the reign of king Henry VII. To this gentleman the town of Stratford is indebted for the fine stone-bridge, consisting of fourteen arches, which, at an extraordinary expence, he built over the Avon,

To this Latin inscription on Shakspeare should be added the lines which are found underneath it on his monument:

Stay, passenger, why dost thou go so fast?  
 Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plac'd  
 Within this monument; Shakspeare, with whom  
 Quick nature dy'd, whose name doth deck the tomb.  
 Far more than cost; since all that he hath writ  
 Leaves living art but page to serve his wit.

Again, near the wall on which this monument is erected, is a plain free-stone, under which his body is buried, with another epitaph, expressed in the following uncouth mixture of small and capital letters:

Good friend for Iesus SAKE forbear  
 To dicc TE Dust EnclōAsed HERe  
 Blese be TE Man T spares TEs Stones  
 And curst be He T moves my bones. STEEVENS,

together





A. Smith sculp.





together with a causeway running at the west-end thereof; as also for rebuilding the chapel adjoining to his house, and the cross-aisle in the church there. It is remarkable of him, that, though he lived and died a bachelor, among the other extensive charities which he left both to the city of London and town of Stratford, he bequeathed considerable legacies for the marriage of poor maidens of good name and fame both in London and at Stratford. Notwithstanding which large donations in his life, and bequests at his death, as he had purchased the manor of Clopton, and all the estate of the family, so he left the same again to his elder brother's son with a very great addition (a proof how well beneficence and œconomy may walk hand in hand in wise families): good part of which estate is yet in the possession of Edward Clopton, esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton, knt. lineally descended from the elder brother of the first Sir Hugh, who particularly bequeathed to his nephew, by his will, his house, by the name of his *Great House* in Stratford.

The estate had now been sold out of the Clopton family for above a century, at the time when Shakspeare became the purchaser; who, having repaired and modelled it to his own mind, changed the name to *New-Place*, which the mansion-house, since erected upon the same spot, at this day retains. The house and lands, which attended it, continued in Shakspeare's descendants to the time of the *Restoration*; when they were repurchased by the Clopton family, and the mansion now belongs to Sir Hugh Clopton, knt. To

the favour of this worthy gentleman I owe the knowledge of one particular, in honour of our poet's once dwelling-house, of which, I presume, Mr. Rowe never was apprized. When the civil war raged in England, and king Charles the First's queen was driven by the necessity of affairs to make a recess in Warwickshire, she kept her court for three weeks in New-Place. We may reasonably suppose it then the best private house in the town; and her majesty preferred it to the college, which was in the possession of the Combe family, who did not so strongly favour the king's party.

How much our author employed himself in poetry, after his retirement from the stage, does not so evidently appear: very few posthumous sketches of his pen have been recovered to ascertain that point. We have been told, indeed, in print\*, but not till very lately, that two large chests full of this great man's loose papers and manuscripts, in the hands of an ignorant baker of Warwick (who married one of the descendants from our Shakspeare), were carelessly scattered and thrown about as garret-lumber and litter, to the particular knowledge of the late Sir William Bishop, till they were all consumed in the general fire and destruction of that town. I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the authority of this tradition, because his wife survived him seven years; and, as his

\* See an answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, by a Strolling Player, 8vo. 1729, p. 45.

REED.

favourite daughter Susanna survived her twenty-six years, it is very improbable they should suffer such a treasure to be removed, and translated into a remoter branch of the family, without a scrutiny first made into the value of it. This, I say, inclines me to distrust the authority of the relation: but, notwithstanding such an apparent improbability, if we really lost such a treasure, by whatever fatality or caprice of fortune they came into such ignorant and neglectful hands, I agree with the *relater*, the misfortune is wholly irreparable.

To these particulars, which regard his person and private life, some few more are to be gleaned from Mr. Rowe's *Account of his Life and Writings*: let us now take a short view of him in his publick capacity as a *writer*: and, from thence, the transition will be easy to the *state* in which his *writings* have been handed down to us.

No age, perhaps, can produce an author more various from himself, than Shakspeare has been universally acknowledged to be. The diversity in style, and other parts of composition, so obvious in him, is as variously to be accounted for. His education, we find, was at best but begun: and he started early into a science from the force of genius, unequally assisted by acquired improvements. His fire, spirit, and exuberance of imagination, gave an impetuosity to his pen: his ideas flowed from him in a stream rapid, but not turbulent; copious, but not ever overbearing its

shores. The ease and sweetness of his temper might not a little contribute to his facility in writing ; as his employment, as a *player*, gave him an advantage and habit of fancying himself the very character he meant to delineate. He used the helps of his function in forming himself to create and express that *sublime*, which other actors can only copy, and throw out, in action and graceful attitude. But, *Nullum sine veniâ placuit ingenium*, says Seneca. The genius, that gives us the greatest pleasure, sometimes stands in need of our indulgence. Whenever this happens with regard to Shakspeare, I would willingly impute it to a vice of *his times*. We see complaisance enough, in our days, paid to a *bad taste*. So that his *clinches*, *false wit*, and descending beneath himself, may have proceeded from a deference paid to the then *reigning barbarism*.

I have not thought it out of my province, whenever occasion offered, to take notice of some of our poet's grand touches of nature ; some, that do not appear sufficiently such, but in which he seems the most deeply instructed ; and to which, no doubt, he has so much owed that happy preservation of his *characters*, for which he is justly celebrated. Great geniuses, like his, naturally unambitious, are satisfied to conceal their art in these points. It is the foible of your worser poets to make a parade and ostentation of that little science they have ; and to throw it out in the most ambitious colours. And whenever a writer of this class shall attempt to copy these artful concealments of our author, and shall either think them easy,

or practised by a writer for his ease, he will soon be convinced of his mistake by the difficulty of reaching the imitation of them.

*Speret idem, sudet multum, frustra que laboret,  
Ausus idem.*————

Indeed, to point out and exclaim upon all the beauties of Shakspeare, as they come singly in review, would be as insipid, as endless ; as tedious, as unnecessary : but the explanation of those beauties that are less obvious to common readers, and whose illustration depends on the rules of just criticism, and an exact knowledge of human life, should deservedly have a share in a general critique upon the author. But to pass over at once to another subject :——

It has been allowed on all hands, how far our author was indebted to *nature* ; it is not so well agreed, how much he owed to *languages* and acquired *learning*. The decisions on this subject were certainly set on foot by the hint from Ben Jonson, that he had small Latin, and less Greek : and from this tradition, as it were, Mr. Rowe has thought fit peremptorily to declare, that, “ It is without controversy, he had no knowledge of  
“ the writings of the ancient poets, for that in his  
“ works we find no traces of any thing which looks  
“ like an imitation of the ancients. For the delicacy  
“ of his taste (continues he) and the natural bent of  
“ his own great genius (equal, if not superior, to  
“ some of the best of theirs), would certainly have  
“ led

“ led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed with, his own writings: and so his not copying, at least, something from them, may be an argument of his never having read them.” I shall leave it to the determination of my learned readers, from the numerous passages which I have occasionally quoted in my notes, in which our poet seems closely to have imitated the classicks, whether Mr. Rowe’s assertion be so absolutely to be depended on. The result of the controversy must certainly, either way, terminate to our author’s honour: how happily he could imitate them, if that point be allowed; or how gloriously he could think like them, without owing any thing to imitation.

Though I should be very unwilling to allow Shakspeare so poor a scholar, as many have laboured to represent him, yet I shall be very cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the question; that is with regard to my opinion of his knowledge in the dead languages. And therefore the passages, that I occasionally quote from the classicks, shall not be urged as proofs that he knowingly imitated those originals; but brought to shew how happily he has expressed himself upon the same topicks. A very learned critick of our own nation has declared, that a sameness of thought, and sameness of expression too, in two writers of a different age, can hardly happen, without a violent suspicion of the latter copying from

his predecessor. I shall not therefore run any great risque of a censure, though I should venture to hint, that the resemblances in thought and expression of our author and an ancient (which we should allow to be imitation in the one, whose learning was not questioned), may sometimes take its rise from strength of memory, and those impressions which he owed to the school. And if we may allow a possibility of this, considering that, when he quitted the school, he gave into his father's profession and way of living, and had, it is likely, but a slender library of classical learning; and considering what a number of translations, romances, and legends, started about his time, and a little before (most of which, it is very evident, he read); I think it may easily be reconciled, why he rather schemed his *plots* and *characters* from these more latter informations, than went back to those fountains, for which he might entertain a sincere veneration, but to which he could not have so ready a recourse.

In touching on another part of his learning, as it related to the knowledge of *history* and *books*, I shall advance something, that, at first sight, will very much wear the appearance of a paradox. For I shall find it no hard matter to prove, that, from the grossest blunders in history, we are not to infer his real ignorance of it; nor from a greater use of Latin words, than ever any other English author used, must we infer his intimate acquaintance with that language.

A reader

A reader of taste may easily observe, that though Shakspeare, almost in every scene of his historical plays, commits the grossest offences against chronology, history, and ancient politicks; yet this was not through ignorance, as is generally supposed, but through the too powerful blaze of his imagination, which, when once raised, made all acquired knowledge vanish and disappear before it. But this licence in him, as I have said, must not be imputed to ignorance; since as often we may find him, when occasion serves, reasoning up to the truth of history; and throwing out sentiments as justly adapted to the circumstances of his subject, as to the dignity of his characters, or dictates of nature in general.

Then to come to his knowledge of the Latin tongue, it is certain, there is a surprising effusion of Latin words made English, far more than in any one English author I have seen; but we must be cautious to imagine, this was of his own doing. For the English tongue, in his age, began extremely to suffer by an inundation of Latin: and this, to be sure, was occasioned by the pedantry of those two monarchs, Elizabeth and James, both great Latinists. For it is not to be wondered at, if both the court and schools, equal flatterers of power, should adapt themselves to the royal taste.

But now I am touching on the question (which has been so frequently agitated, yet so entirely undecided) of his learning and acquaintance with the languages; an additional word or two naturally falls in here upon the



the genius of our author, as compared with that of Jonson his contemporary. They are confessedly the greatest writers our nation could ever boast of in the *drama*. The first, we say, owed all to his prodigious natural genius; and the other a great deal to his art and learning. This, if attended to, will explain a very remarkable appearance in their writings. Besides those wonderful master-pieces of art and genius, which each has given us, they are the authors of other works very unworthy of them; but with this difference, that in Jonson's bad pieces we do not discover one single trace of the author of *The Fox* and *Alchymist*; but, in the wild extravagant notes of Shakspeare, you every now and then encounter strains that recognize the divine composer. This difference may be thus accounted for: Jonson, as we said before, owing all his excellence to his art, by which he sometimes strained himself to an uncommon pitch, when at other times he unbent and played with his subject, having nothing then to support him, it is no wonder that he wrote so far beneath himself. But Shakspeare, indebted more largely to nature, than the other to acquired talents, in his most negligent hours could never so totally divest himself of his genius, but that it would frequently break out with astonishing force and splendour.

As I have never proposed to dilate farther on the character of my author, than was necessary to explain the nature and use of this edition, I shall proceed to consider him as a genius in possession of an everlasting name. And how great that merit must be, which  
could

could gain it against all the disadvantages of the horrid condition in which he has hitherto appeared! Had Homer, or any other admired author, first started into publick so maimed and deformed, we cannot determine whether they had not sunk for ever under the ignominy of such an ill-appearance. The mangled condition of Shakspeare has been acknowledged by Mr. Rowe, who published him indeed, but neither corrected his text, nor collated the old copies. This gentleman had abilities, and sufficient knowledge of his author, had but his industry been equal to his talents. The same mangled condition has been acknowledged too by Mr. Pope, who published him likewise, pretended to have collated the old copies, and yet seldom has corrected the text but to its injury. I congratulate with the *manes* of our poet, that this gentleman has been sparing in *indulging his private sense*, as he phrases it; for he, who tampers with an author, whom he does not understand, must do it at the expence of his subject. I have made it evident throughout my remarks, that he has frequently inflicted a wound where he intended a cure. He has acted with regard to our author, as an editor, whom LIPSIVS mentions, did with regard to MARTIAL; *Inventus est nescio quis Popa, qui non vitia ejus, sed ipsum excidet*. He has attacked him like an unhandy *slaughterman*; and not lopped off the *errors*, but the *poet*.

When this is found to be fact, how absurd must appear the praises of such an editor? It seems a moot point, whether Mr. Pope has done most injury to  
Shakspeare,

Shakspeare, as his editor and encomiast ; or Mr. Rymer done him service, as his rival and censor. They have both shewn themselves in an equal *impuissance* of suspecting or amending the corrupted passages ; and though it be neither prudence to censure or commend what one does not understand ; yet, if a man must do one when he plays the critick, the latter is the more ridiculous office ; and by that Shakspeare suffers most. For the natural veneration which we have for him makes us apt to swallow whatever is given us as *his*, and set off with encomiums ; and hence we quit all suspicions of depravity : on the contrary, the censure of so divine an author sets us upon his defence ; and this produces an exact scrutiny and examination, which ends in finding out and discriminating the true from the spurious.

It is not with any secret pleasure, that I so frequently animadvert on Mr. Pope as a critick ; but there are provocations, which a man can never quite forget. His libels have been thrown out with so much inveteracy, that not to dispute whether they *should* come from a *Christian*, they leave it a question whether they *could* come from a *man*. I should be loth to doubt, as Quintus Serenus did in a like case :

*Sive homo, seu similis turpissima bestia nobis  
Vulnera dente dedit.*

The indignation, perhaps, for being represented a *blockhead*, may be as strong in us, as it is in the ladies

for a reflection on their *beauties*. It is certain, I am indebted to him for some *flagrant civilities*; and I shall willingly devote a part of my life to the honest endeavour of quitting scores: with this exception, however, that I will not return those civilities in his *peculiar* strain, but confine myself, at least, to the limits of *common decency*. I shall ever think it better to want *wit*, than to want *humanity*: and impartial posterity may, perhaps, be of my opinion.

But to return to my subject, which now calls upon me to inquire into those causes, to which the deprivations of my author originally may be assigned; we are to consider him as a writer, of whom no authentick manuscript was left extant; as a writer, whose pieces were dispersedly performed on the several *stages* then in being. And it was the custom of those days for the poets to take a price of the *players* for the pieces they from time to time furnished; and thereupon it was supposed they had no farther right to print them without the consent of the *players*. As it was the interest of the *companies* to keep their plays unpublished, when any one succeeded, there was a contest betwixt the curiosity of the town, who demanded to see it in print, and the policy of the *stagers*, who wished to secrete it within their own walls. Hence many pieces were taken down in short-hand, and imperfectly copied by ear from a *representation*: others were printed from piecemeal parts surreptitiously obtained from the theatres, incorrect, and without the poet's knowledge. To some of these causes we owe the train of blemishes,  
that

that deform those pieces which stole singly into the world in our author's life-time.

There are still other reasons, which may be supposed to have affected the whole set. When the *players* took upon them to publish his works entire, every theatre was ransacked to supply the copy; and *parts* collected, which had gone through as many changes as performers, either from mutilations or additions made to them. Hence we derive many chasms and incoherences in the sense and matter. Scenes were frequently transposed, and shuffled out of their true place, to humour the caprice, or supposed convenience, of some particular actor. Hence much confusion and impropriety has attended and embarrassed the business and fable. To these obvious causes of corruption it must be added, that our author has lain under the disadvantage of having his errors propagated and multiplied by time: because, for near a century, his works were published from the faulty copies, without the assistance of any intelligent editor: which has been the case likewise of many a *classick* writer.

The nature of any distemper once found, has generally been the immediate step to a cure. Shakspeare's case has in a great measure resembled that of a corrupt *classick*; and, consequently, the method of cure was likewise to bear a resemblance. By what means, and with what success, this cure has been effected on ancient writers, is too well known, and needs no formal illustration. The reputation, consequent on tasks of that nature, invited me to attempt the method here;

with this view, the hopes of restoring to the publick their greatest poet in his original purity, after having so long lain in a condition that was a disgrace to common sense. To this end I have ventured on a labour, that is the first assay of the kind on any modern author whatsoever. For the late edition of Milton, by the learned Dr. Bentley, is, in the main, a performance of another species. It is plain, it was the intention of that great man rather to correct and pare off the excrescencies of the *Paradise Lost*, in the manner that Tucca and Varius were employed to criticise the *Æneis of Virgil*, than to restore corrupted passages. Hence, therefore, may be seen either the iniquity or ignorance of his censurers, who, from some expressions, would make us believe the *doctor* every where gives us his corrections as the original text of the author; whereas the chief turn of his criticism is plainly to shew the world, that, if Milton did not write as he would have him, he ought to have wrote so.

I thought proper to premise this observation to the readers, as it will shew that the critique on Shakspeare is of a quite different kind. His genuine text is for the most part religiously adhered to, and the numerous faults and blemishes, purely his own, are left as they were found. Nothing is altered, but what, by the clearest reasoning, can be proved a corruption of the true text; and the alteration, a real restoration of the genuine reading. Nay, so strictly have I strove to give the true reading, though sometimes not to the advantage

vantage of my author, that I have been ridiculously ridiculed for it by those, who either were iniquitously for turning every thing to my disadvantage; or else were totally ignorant of the true duty of an editor.

The science of criticism, as far as it affects an editor, seems to be reduced to these three classes; the emendation of corrupt passages; the explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an inquiry into the beauties and defects of composition. This work is principally confined to the two former parts: though there are some specimens interspersed of the latter kind, as several of the emendations were best supported, and several of the difficulties best explained, by taking notice of the beauties and defects of the composition peculiar to this immortal poet. But this was but occasional, and for the sake only of perfecting the two other parts, which were the proper objects of the editor's labour; the third lies open for every willing undertaker: and I shall be pleased to see it the employment of a masterly pen.

It must necessarily happen, as I have formerly observed, that where the assistance of manuscripts is wanting to set an author's meaning right, and rescue him from those errors which have been transmitted down through a series of incorrect editions, and a long intervention of time, many passages must be desperate, and past a cure; and their true sense irretrievable either to care or the sagacity of conjecture. But is there any reason therefore to say, that because all can-

not be retrieved, all ought to be left desperate? We should shew very little honesty, or wisdom, to play the tyrants with an author's text; to raze, alter, innovate, and overturn; at all adventures, and to the utter detriment of his sense and meaning: but to be so very reserved and cautious, as to interpose no relief or conjecture, where it manifestly labours and cries out for assistance, seems, on the other hand, an indolent absurdity.

As there are very few pages in Shakspeare, upon which some suspicions of depravity do not reasonably arise; I have thought it my duty, in the first place, by a diligent and laborious collation, to take in the assistances of all the older copies.

In his *historical plays*, whenever our English chronicles, and in his tragedies, when Greek or Roman story could give any light, no pains have been omitted to set passages right, by comparing my author with his originals; for, as I have frequently observed, he was a close and accurate copier wherever his *fable* was founded on *history*.

Wherever the author's sense is clear and discoverable (though, perchance, low and trivial), I have not by any innovation tampered with his text, out of an ostentation of endeavouring to make him speak better than the old copies have done.

Where, through all the former editions, a passage has laboured under flat nonsense and invincible darkness, if, by the addition or alteration of a letter or two, or a transposition in the pointing, I have restored  
to



to him both sense and sentiment ; such corrections, I am persuaded, will need no indulgence.

And whenever I have taken a greater latitude and liberty in amending, I have constantly endeavoured to support my corrections and conjectures by parallel passages and authorities from himself, the surest means of expounding any author whatsoever. *Cette voie d'interpreter un auteur par lui-même, est plus sure que tous les commentaires*, says a very learned French critick.

As to my *notes* (from which the common and learned readers of our author, I hope, will derive some satisfaction), I have endeavoured to give them a variety in some proportion to their number. Wherever I have ventured at an emendation, a *note* is constantly subjoined to justify and assert the reason of it. Where I only offer a conjecture, and do not disturb the text, I fairly set forth my grounds for such conjecture, and submit it to judgment. Some remarks are spent in explaining passages, where the wit or satire depends on an obscure point of history : others, where allusions are to divinity, philosophy, or other branches of science. Some are added, to shew where there is a suspicion of our author having borrowed from the ancients : others, to shew where he is rallying his contemporaries ; or where he himself is rallied by them. And some are necessarily thrown in, to explain an obscure and obsolete *term, phrase, or idea*. I once intended to have added a complete and copious *glossary* ; but as I have been importuned, and am prepared to give a correct edition of our author's POEMS (in which  
many

many terms occur that are not to be met with in his plays), I thought a *glossary* to all Shakspeare's works more proper to attend that volume.

In reforming an infinite number of passages in the pointing, where the sense was before quite lost, I have frequently subjoined notes, to shew the *depraved*, and to prove the *reformed*, pointing: a part of labour in this work which I could very willingly have spared myself. May it not be objected, why then have you burdened us with these notes? The answer is obvious, and, if I mistake not, very material. Without such notes, these passages in subsequent editions would be liable, through the ignorance of printers and correctors, to fall into the old confusion: whereas, a note on every one hinders all possible return to depravity: and for ever secures them in a state of purity and integrity not to be lost or forfeited.

Again, as some notes have been necessary to point out the detection of the corrupted text, and establish the restoration of the genuine readings; some others have been as necessary for the explanation of passages obscure and difficult. To understand the necessity and use of this part of my task, some particulars of my author's character are previously to be explained. There are *obscurities* in him, which are common to him with all poets of the same species; there are others, the issue of the times he lived in; and there are others, again, peculiar to himself. The nature of comick poetry being entirely satirical, it busies itself more in exposing what we call caprice and humour, than vices cognizable

cognizable to the laws. The English, from the happiness of a free constitution, and a turn of mind peculiarly speculative and inquisitive, are observed to produce more *humourists*, and a greater variety of original *characters*, than any other people whatsoever: and these owing their immediate birth to the peculiar genius of each age, an infinite number of things alluded to, glanced at, and exposed, must needs become obscure, as the *characters* themselves are antiquated and disused. An editor, therefore, should be well versed in the history and manners of his author's age, if he aims at doing him a service in this respect.

Besides, *wit* lying mostly in the assemblage of *ideas*, and in putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance, or congruity, to make up pleasant pictures, and agreeable visions in the fancy; the writer, who aims at wit, must of course range far and wide for materials. Now the age in which Shakspeare lived, having, above all others, a wonderful affection to appear learned, they declined vulgar images, such as are immediately fetched from nature, and ranged through the circle of the sciences, to fetch their ideas from thence. But as the resemblances of such ideas to the subject must necessarily lie very much out of the common way, and every piece of wit appear a riddle to the vulgar; this, that should have taught them the forced, quaint, unnatural tract they were in (and induce them to follow a more natural one), was the very thing that kept them attached to it. The ostentatious affectation of abstruse learning,  
peculiar

peculiar to that time, the love that men naturally have to every thing that looks like mystery, fixed them down to the habit of obscurity. Thus became the poetry of DONNE (though the wittiest man of that age), nothing but a continued heap of riddles. And our Shakspeare, with all his easy nature about him, for want of the knowledge of the true rules of art, falls frequently into this vicious manner.

The third species of *obscurities* which deform our author, as the effects of his own genius and character, are those that proceed from his peculiar manner of *thinking*, and as peculiar a manner of *clothing* those *thoughts*. With regard to his *thinking*, it is certain, that he had a general knowledge of all the sciences : but his acquaintance was rather that of a traveller than a native. Nothing in philosophy was unknown to him ; but every thing in it had the grace and force of novelty. And as novelty is one main source of admiration, we are not to wonder that he has perpetual allusions to the most recondite parts of the sciences : and this was done not so much out of affectation, as the effect of admiration begot by novelty. Then, as to his *style* and *diction*, we may much more justly apply to SHAKESPEARE, what a celebrated writer said of MILTON : *Our language sunk under him, and was unequal to that greatness of soul which furnished him with such glorious conceptions.* He therefore frequently uses old words, to give his diction an air of solemnity ; as he coins others, to express the novelty and variety of his ideas.

Upon

Upon every distinct species of these *abscurities*, I have thought it my province to employ a note for the service of my author, and the entertainment of my readers. A few transient remarks too I have not scrupled to intermix, upon the poet's *negligences* and *omissions* in point of art ; but I have done it always in such a manner, as will testify my deference and veneration for the immortal author. Some censurers of Shakspeare, and particularly Mr. Rymer, have taught me to distinguish betwixt the *railer* and *critick*. The outrage of his quotations is so remarkably violent, so pushed beyond all bounds of decency and sober reasoning, that it quite carries over the mark at which it was levelled. Extravagant abuse throws off the edge of the intended disparagement, and turns the madman's weapon into his own bosom. In short, as to Rymer, this is my opinion of him, from his *criticisms* on the *tragedies* of the last age. He writes with great vivacity, and appears to have been a scholar : but as for his knowledge of the art of poetry, I cannot perceive it was any deeper than his acquaintance with Bossu and Dacier, from whom he has transcribed many of his best reflections. The late Mr. Gildon was one attached to Rymer by a similar way of thinking and studies. They were both of that species of criticks who are desirous of displaying their powers rather in finding faults, than in consulting the improvement of the world ; the *hyper-critical* part of the science of criticism.

I had

I had not mentioned the modest liberty I have here and there taken of animadverting on my author; but that I was willing to obviate, in time, the splenetick exaggerations of my adversaries on this head. From past experiments I have reason to be conscious, in what light this attempt may be placed: and that what I call a *modest liberty* will, by a little of their dexterity, be inverted into downright *impudence*. From a hundred mean and dishonest artifices employed to discredit this edition, and to cry down its editor, I have all the grounds in nature to beware of attacks. But though the malice of wit, joined to the smoothness of versification, may furnish some ridicule; fact, I hope, will be able to stand its ground against banter and gaiety.

It has been my fate, it seems, as I thought it my duty, to discover some *anachronisms* in our author; which might have slept in obscurity but for *this Restorer*, as Mr. Pope is pleased affectionately to stile me; as for instance, where Aristotle is mentioned by Hector in *Troilus and Cressida*; and Galen, Cato, and Alexander the Great, in *Coriolanus*. These, in Mr. Pope's opinion, are blunders, which the illiteracy of the first publishers of his works has fathered upon the poet's memory: *it not being at all credible, that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least conversation with such as had.* But I have sufficiently proved, in the course of my notes, that such *anachronisms* were the effect of poetick licence, rather than of ignorance in our poet. And if I may be permitted

permitted to ask a modest question by the way, why may I not restore an *anachronism* really made by our author, as well as Mr. Pope take the privilege to fix others upon him, which he never had it in his head to make ; as I may venture to affirm he had not, in the instance of Sir Francis Drake, to which I have spoke in the proper place ?

But who shall dare make any words about this freedom of Mr. Pope's towards Shakspeare, if it can be proved, that, in his fits of criticism, he makes no more ceremony with good Homer himself ? To try, then, a criticism of his own advancing : in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*, where Demodocus sings the episode of the loves of Mars and Venus ; and that, upon their being taken in the net by Vulcan,

—————“ *The god of arms*  
 “ *Must pay the penalty for lawless charms ;*”

Mr. Pope is so kind gravely to inform us, “ That Homer in this, as in many other places, seems to allude to the laws of Athens, where death was the punishment of adultery.” But how is this significant observation made out ? Why, who can possibly object any thing to the contrary ?——*Does not Pausanias relate, that Draco, the lawgiver to the Athenians, granted impunity to any person that took revenge upon an adulterer ? And was it not also the institution of Solon, that if any one took an adulterer in the fact, he might use him as he pleased ?* These things are very true : and to see what

a good memory, and sound judgment in conjunction, can achieve! though Homer's date is not determined down to a single year, yet it is pretty generally agreed that he lived above three hundred years before Draco and Solon: and that, it seems, has made him *seem* to allude to the very laws, which these two legislators propounded above three hundred years after. If this inference be not something like an *anachronism* or *prolepsis*, I will look once more into my lexicons for the true meaning of the words. It appears to me, that somebody besides Mars and Venus has been caught in a net by this episode: and I could call in other instances, to confirm what treacherous tackle this network is, if not cautiously handled.

How just, notwithstanding, I have been in detecting the *anachronisms* of my author, and in defending him for the use of them, our late editor seems to think, they should rather have slept in obscurity: and the having discovered them is sneered at, as a sort of wrong-headed sagacity.

The numerous corrections which I have made of the poet's text in my *SHAKESPEARE Restored*, and which the publick have been so kind to think well of, are, in the appendix of Mr. Pope's last edition, slightly called *various reasonings, guesses, &c.* He confesses to have inserted as many of them as he judged of any the least advantage to the poet; but says, that the whole amounted to about twenty-five words: and pretends to have annexed a complete list of the rest, which were not worth his embracing. Whoever has read

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my book will, at one glance, see, how in both these points veracity is strained, so an injury might but be done : *Malus, etsi obesse non potest, tamen cogitat.*

Another expedient, to make my work appear of a trifling nature, has been an attempt to depreciate *literal criticism*. To this end, and to pay a servile compliment to Mr. Pope, an *anonymous* writer \* has, like a Scotch pedlar in wit, unbraced his pack on the subject. But, that his virulence might not seem to be levelled singly at me, he has done me the honour to join Dr. Bentley in the libel. I was in hopes we should have been both abused with smartness of satire at least, though not with solidity of argument ; that it might have been worth some reply in defence of the science attacked. But I may fairly say of this author, as Falstaff does of Poin ;—*Hang him, baboon ! his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard ; there is no more conceit in him, than is in a Mallet.* If it be not prophanation to set the opinion of the divine Longinus against such a scribbler, he tells us expressly, “ That  
“ to make a judgment upon words (and writings)  
“ is the most consummate fruit of much experience.  
ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις σωδὴς ἐστὶ πείρας τελευταῖον  
ἐπιγίνωγμα. Whenever words are depraved, the sense  
of course must be corrupted ; and thence the reader is  
betrayed into a false meaning.

\* David Mallet. See his poem *Of Verbal Criticism*, vol. i. of his works, 12mo. 1759.

REED.

If the Latin and Greek languages have received the greatest advantages imaginable from the labours of the editors and criticks of the two last ages, by whose aid and assistance the grammarians have been enabled to write infinitely better in that art than even the preceding grammarians, who wrote when those tongues flourished as living languages; I should account it a peculiar happiness, that, by the faint essay I have made in this work, a path might be chalked out for abler hands, by which to derive the same advantages to our own tongue; a tongue, which, though it wants none of the fundamental qualities of an universal language, yet, as a *noble writer*, says, lisps and stammers as in its cradle; and has produced little more towards its polishing than complaints of its barbarity.

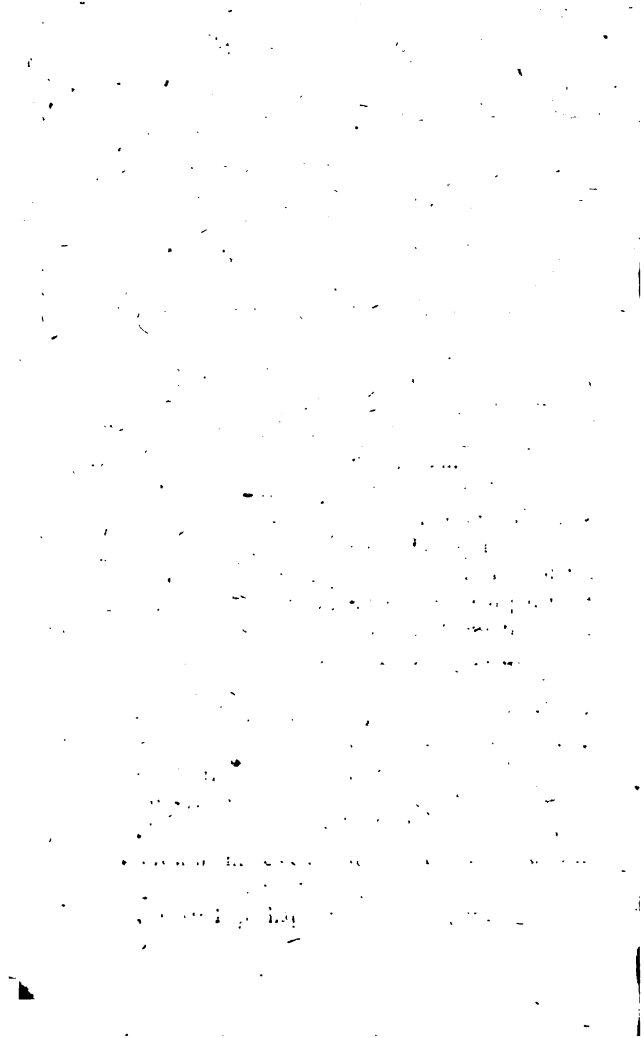
Having now run through all those points, which I intended should make any part of this dissertation, and having in my *former* edition made publick acknowledgments of the assistances lent me, I shall conclude with a brief account of the methods taken in *this*.

It was thought proper, in order to reduce the bulk and price of the impression, that the notes, wherever they would admit of it, might be abridged: for which reason I have curtailed a great quantity of such, in which explanations were too prolix, or authorities in support of an emendation too numerous: and many I have entirely expunged, which were judged rather verbose and declamatory (and so notes merely of ostentation) than necessary or instructive.

The

The few literal errors which had escaped notice, for want of revisals, in the former edition, are here reformed; and the pointing of innumerable passages is regulated, with all the accuracy I am capable of.

I shall decline making any farther declaration of the pains I have taken upon my author, because it was my duty, as his editor, to publish him with my best care and judgment; and because I am sensible, all such declarations are construed to be laying a sort of a debt on the publick. As the former edition has been received with much indulgence, I ought to make my acknowledgments to the town for their favourable opinion of it; and I shall always be proud to think that encouragement the best payment I can hope to receive from my poor studies.





*From an Original Picture Painted by S<sup>r</sup> G. Kneller, in the Possession of S<sup>r</sup> Cha<sup>s</sup> Hanmer, Bart.*



it worth being made publick ; and he, who hath with difficulty yielded to their persuasions, is far from desiring to reflect upon the late editors for the omissions and defects which they left to be supplied by others who should follow them in the same province. On the contrary, he thinks the world much obliged to them for the progress they made in weeding out so great a number of blunders and mistakes as they have done ; and probably he who hath carried on the work might never have thought of such an undertaking, if he had not found a considerable part so done to his hands.

From what causes it proceeded that the works of this author, in the first publication of them, were more injured and abused than perhaps any that ever passed the press, hath been sufficiently explained in the preface to Mr. Pope's edition, and there needs no more to be said upon that subject. This only the reader is desired to bear in mind, that as the corruptions are more numerous, and of a grosser kind than can well be conceived, but by those who have looked nearly into them ; so in the correcting them this rule hath been most strictly observed, not to give a loose to fancy, or indulge a licentious spirit of criticism, as if it were fit for any one to presume to judge what Shakspeare ought to have written, instead of endeavouring to discover truly, and retrieve what he did write : and so great caution hath been used in this respect, that no alterations have been made, but what the sense necessarily required,

what

what the measure of the verse often helped to point out, and what the similitude of words, in the false reading and in the true, generally speaking, appeared very well to justify.

Most of those passages are here thrown to the bottom of the page, and rejected as spurious, which were stigmatized as such in Mr. Pope's edition; and it were to be wished that more had then undergone the same sentence. The promoter of the present edition hath ventured to discard but few more upon his own judgment, the most considerable of which is that wretched piece of ribaldry in *King Henry the Fifth*, put into the mouths of the French princess and an old gentlewoman, improper enough as it is all in French, and not intelligible to an English audience, and yet that perhaps is the best thing that can be said of it. There can be no doubt but a great deal more of that low stuff, which disgraces the works of this great author, was foisted in by the players after his death, to please the vulgar audiences by which they subsisted: and though some of the poor witticisms and conceits must be supposed to have fallen from his pen, yet as he hath put them generally into the mouths of low and ignorant people, so it is to be remembered that he wrote for the stage, rude and unpolished as it then was; and the vicious taste of the age must stand condemned for them, since he hath left upon record a signal proof how much he despised them. In his play of *The Merchant of Venice*, a clown is introduced quibbling in a miserable manner; upon which one, who bears



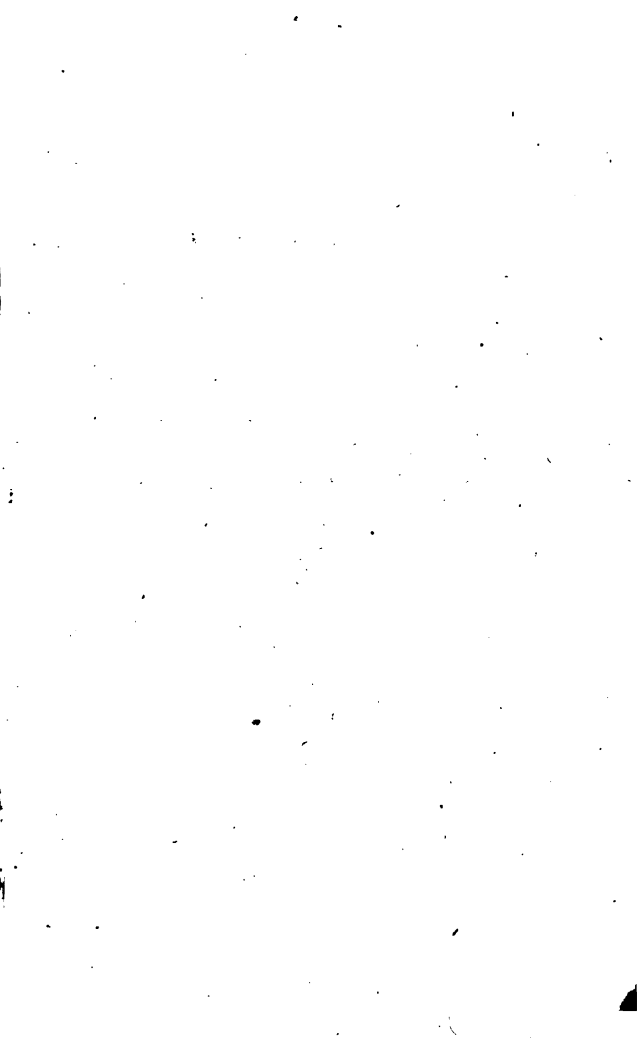
bears the character of a man of sense, makes the following reflection : *How every fool ~~an~~ play upon a word ! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots.* He could hardly have found stronger words to express his indignation at those false pretences to wit then in vogue ; and therefore though such trash is frequently interspersed in his writings, it would be unjust to cast it as an imputation upon his taste and judgment and character as a writer.

There being many words in Shakspeare which are grown out of use and obsolete, and many borrowed from other languages which are not enough naturalized or known among us, a glossary is added at the end of the work, for the explanation of all those terms which have hitherto been so many stumbling-blocks to the generality of readers ; and where there is any obscurity in the text, not arising from the words, but from a reference to some antiquated customs now forgotten, or other causes of that kind, a note is put at the bottom of the page, to clear up the difficulty.

With these several helps, if that rich vein of sense which runs through the works of this author can be retrieved in every part, and brought to appear in its true light, and if it may be hoped, without presumption, that this is here effected ; they who love and admire him will receive a new pleasure, and all probably will be more ready to join in doing him justice, who does great honour to his country as a rare and perhaps a singular genius ; one who hath attained an  
high

high degree of perfection in those two great branches of poetry, tragedy and comedy, different as they are in their natures from each other; and who may be said without partiality to have equalled, if not excelled, in both kinds, the best writers of any age or country, who have thought it glory enough to distinguish themselves in either.

Since, therefore, other nations have taken care to dignify the works of their most celebrated poets with the fairest impressions beautified with the ornaments of sculpture, well may our Shakspeare be thought to deserve no less consideration: and as a fresh acknowledgment hath lately been paid to his merit, and a high regard to his name and memory, by erecting his statue at a publick expence; so it is desired that this new edition of his works, which hath cost some attention and care, may be looked upon as another small monument designed and dedicated to his honour.

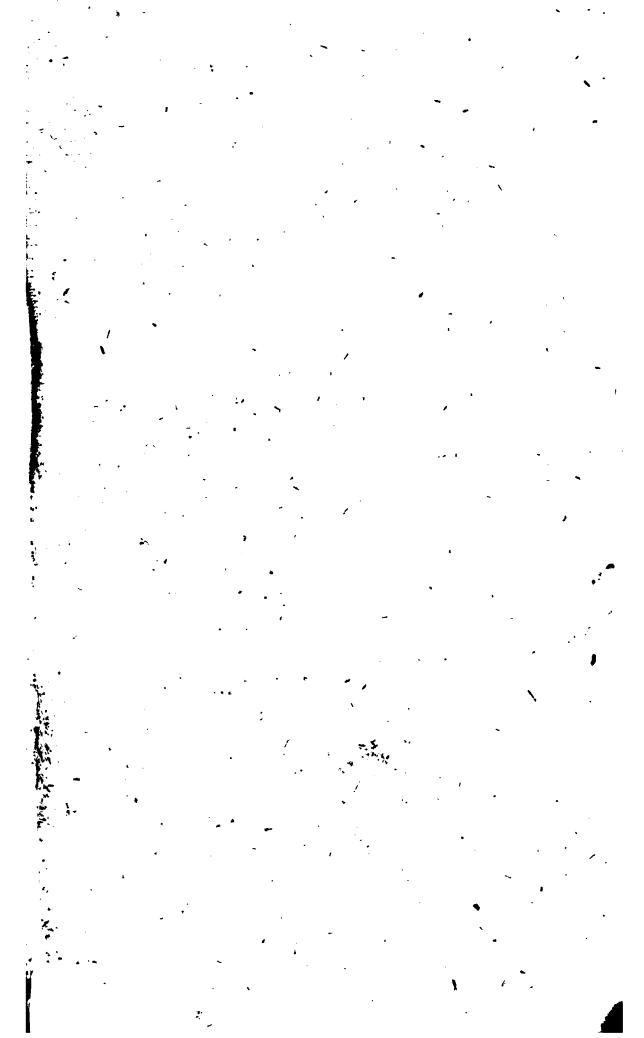




*Engraved by A. Smith from a Picture in Gloucester Palace.*

**WILLIAM WARBURTON,**

*BISHOP OF GLoucester*





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*DR. WARBURTON'S*  
**P R E F A C E.**

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**I**T hath been no unusual thing for writers, when dissatisfied with the patronage or judgment of their own times, to appeal to posterity for a fair hearing. Some have even thought fit to apply to it in the first instance; and to decline acquaintance with the publick, till envy and prejudice had quite subsided. But, of all the trusters to futurity, commend me to the author of the following poems, who not only left it to time to do him justice as it would, but to find him out as it could. For, what between too great attention to his profit as a player, and too little to his reputation as a poet, his works, left to the care of door-keepers and prompters, hardly escape the common fate of those writings, how good soever, which are abandoned to their own fortune, and unprotected by party or cabal. At length, indeed, they struggled into light; but so disguised and travestied, that no classick author, after having run ten secular stages through the blind cloisters of monks and canons, ever came out in half so maimed and mangled a condition. But for a full account of his disorders, I refer the reader to the excellent

cellent discourse in Mr. Pope's Preface, and turn myself to consider the remedies that have been applied to them.

Shakspeare's works, when they escaped the players, did not fall into much better hands when they came amongst printers and booksellers; who, to say the truth, had at first but small encouragement for putting him into a better condition. The stubborn nonsense, with which he was incrustcd, occasioned his lying long neglected amongst the common lumber of the stage. And when that resistless splendour, which now shoots all around him, had, by degrees, broke through the shell of those impurities, his dazzled admirers became as suddenly insensible to the extraneous scurf that still stuck upon him, as they had been before to the native beauties that lay under it. So that, as then he was thought not to deserve a cure, he was now supposed not to need any.

His growing eminence, however, required that he should be used with ceremony; and he soon had his appointment of an editor in form. But the bookseller, whose dealing was with wits, having learnt of them, I know not what silly maxim, that *none but a poet should presume to meddle with a poet*, engaged the ingenious Mr. Rowe to undertake this employment. A wit indeed he was; but so utterly unacquainted with the whole business of criticism, that he did not even collate or consult the first editions of the work he undertook to publish; but contented himself with giving us a meagre account of the author's life, interlarded with  
some



some common-place scraps from his writings. The truth is, Shakspeare's condition was yet but ill understood. The nonsense, now, by consent, received for his own, was held in a kind of reverence for its age and author; and thus it continued till another great poet broke the charm, by shewing us, that the higher we went, the less of it was still to be found.

For the proprietors, not discouraged by their first unsuccessful effort, in due time, made a second; and, though they still stuck to their poets, with infinitely more success in their choice of Mr. Pope, who, by the mere force of an uncommon genius, without any particular study or profession of this art, discharged the great parts of it so well, as to make his edition the best foundation for all further improvements. He separated the genuine from the spurious plays; and, with equal judgment, though not always with the same success, attempted to clear the genuine plays from the interpolated scenes: he then consulted the old editions; and, by a careful collation of them, rectified the faulty, and supplied the imperfect reading in a great number of places: and, lastly, in an admirable preface, hath drawn a general, but very lively sketch, of Shakspeare's poetick character; and, in the corrected text, marked out those peculiar strokes of genius which were most proper to support and illustrate that character. Thus far Mr. Pope. And although much more was to be done before Shakspeare could be restored to himself (such as amending the corrupted text where the printed books afford no

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assistance;

assistance; explaining his licentious phraseology and obscure allusions; and illustrating the beauties of his poetry); yet, with great modesty and prudence, our illustrious editor left this to the critick by profession.

But nothing will give the common reader a better idea of the value of Mr. Pope's edition, than the two attempts which have been since made by Mr. Theobald and Sir Thomas Hanmer in opposition to it; who, although they concerned themselves only in the *first* of these three parts of criticism, the *restoring the text* (without any conception of the *second*, or venturing even to touch upon the *third*), yet succeeded so very ill in it, that they left their author in ten times a worse condition than they found him. But, as it was my ill fortune to have some accidental connexions with these two gentlemen, it will be incumbent on me to be a little more particular concerning them.

The one was recommended to me as a poor man; the other as a poor critick: and to each of them, at different times, I communicated a great number of observations, which they managed, as they saw fit, to the relief of their several distresses. As to Mr. Theobald, who wanted money, I allowed him to print what I gave him, for his own advantage; and he allowed himself in the liberty of taking one part for his own, and sequestering another for the benefit, as I supposed, of some future edition. But, as to the Oxford editor, who wanted nothing but what he might very well be without, the reputation of a critick, I could not so easily forgive him for trafficking with my papers without

out my knowledge ; and, when that project failed, for employing a number of my conjectures in his edition, against my express desire not to have that honour done unto me.

Mr. Theobald was naturally turned to industry and labour. What he read he could transcribe : but, as what he thought, if ever he did think, he could but ill express, so he read on ; and by that means got a character of learning, without risking, to every observer, the imputation of wanting a better talent. By a punctilious collation of the old books, he corrected what was manifestly wrong in the *latter* editions, by what was manifestly right in the *earlier*. And this is his real merit ; and the whole of it. For where the phrase was very obsolete or licentious in the *common* books, or only slightly corrupted in the *other*, he wanted sufficient knowledge of the progress and various stages of the English tongue, as well as acquaintance with the peculiarity of Shakspeare's language, to understand what was right ; nor had he either common judgment to see, or critical sagacity to amend, what was manifestly faulty. Hence he generally exerts his conjectural talent in the wrong place : he tampers with what is found in the *common* books ; and, in the *old* ones, omits all notice of *variations*, the sense of which he did not understand.

How the Oxford editor came to think himself qualified for this office, from which his whole course of life had been so remote, is still more difficult to conceive. For whatever parts he might have, either

of genius or erudition, he was absolutely ignorant of the art of criticism, as well as of the poetry of that time, and the language of his author. And so far from a thought of examining the *first* editions, that he even neglected to compare Mr. Pope's, from which he printed his own, with Mr. Theobald's; whereby he lost the advantage of many fine lines, which the other had recovered from the old quartos. Where he trusts to his own sagacity, in what affects the sense, his conjectures are generally absurd and extravagant, and violating every rule of criticism. Though, in this rage of correcting, he was not absolutely destitute of all *art*. For, having a number of my conjectures before him, he took as many of them as he saw fit, to work upon; and by changing them to something, he thought, synonymous or similar, he made them his own; and so became a critick at a cheap expence. But how well he hath succeeded in this, as likewise in his conjectures, which are properly his own, will be seen in the course of my remarks: though, as he hath declined to give the reasons for his interpolations, he hath not afforded me so fair a hold of him as Mr. Theobald hath done, who was less cautious. But his principal object was to reform his author's numbers; and this, which he hath done, on every occasion, by the insertion or omission of a set of harmless unconcerning expletives, makes up the gross body of his innocent corrections. And so, in spite of that extreme negligence in numbers, which distinguishes the first dramattick writers, he hath tricked up the old bard, from head to foot,

in

in all the finical exactness of a modern measurer of syllables.

For the rest, all the corrections which these two editors have made on any *reasonable* foundation, are here admitted into the text; and carefully assigned to their respective authors: a piece of justice which the Oxford editor never did; and which the *other* was not always scrupulous in observing towards me. To conclude with them in a word, they separately possessed those two qualities which, more than any other, have contributed to bring the art of criticism into disrepute, *dulness of apprehension*, and *extravagance of conjecture*.

I am now to give some account of the present undertaking. For as to all those things which have been published under the titles of *Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on Shakspeare* (if you except some critical notes on *Macbeth*\*, given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius), the rest are absolutely below a serious notice.

The whole a critick can do for an author, who deserves his service, is to correct the faulty text; to remark the peculiarities of language; to illustrate the obscure allusions; and to explain the beauties and defects of sentiment or composition. And surely, if ever author had a claim to this service, it was our Shakspeare; who, widely excelling in the knowledge

\* Published in 1745, by Dr. Johnson. READ.

of human nature, hath given to his infinitely varied pictures of it, such truth of design, such force of drawing, such beauty of colouring, as was hardly ever equalled by any writer, whether his aim was the use; or only the entertainment of mankind. The notes in this edition, therefore, take in the whole compass of criticism.

I. The first sort is employed in restoring the poet's genuine text; but in those places only where it labours with inextricable nonsense. In which, how much soever I may have given scope to critical conjecture, where the old copies failed me, I have indulged nothing to fancy or imagination; but have religiously observed the severe canons of literal criticism, as may be seen from the reasons accompanying every alteration of the common text. Nor would a different conduct have become a critick, whose greatest attention, in this part, was to vindicate the established reading from interpolations occasioned by the fanciful extravagances of others. I once intended to have given the reader a *body of canons*, for literal criticism, drawn out in form; as well such as concern the art in general, as those that arise from the nature and circumstances of our author's works in particular. And this for two reasons. First, to give the *unlearned reader* a just idea, and consequently a better opinion of the art of criticism, now sunk very low in the popular esteem, by the attempts of some who would needs exercise it without either natural or acquired talents; and by the ill success of others, who seemed to have lost both,  
when

when they came to try them upon English authors. Secondly, To deter the *unlearned writer* from wantonly trifling with an art he is a stranger to, at the expence of his own reputation, and the integrity of the text of established authors. But these uses may be well supplied by what is occasionally said upon the subject, in the course of the following remarks.

II. The second sort of notes consists in an explanation of the author's meaning, when by one or more of these causes it becomes obscure; either from a *licentious use of terms*, or a *hard or ungrammatical construction*; or, lastly, from *far-fetched or quaint allusions*.

1. This licentious use of words is almost peculiar to the language of Shakspeare. To common terms he hath affixed meanings of his own, unauthorized by use, and not to be justified by analogy. And this liberty he hath taken with the noblest parts of speech, such as *mixed modes*; which, as they are most susceptible of abuse, so their abuse most hurts the clearness of the discourse. The criticks (to whom Shakspeare's licence was still as much a secret as his meaning which that licence had obscured) fell into two contrary mistakes; but equally injurious to his reputation and his writings. For some of them, observing a darkness that pervaded his whole expression, have censured him for confusion of ideas and inaccuracy of reasoning. *In the neighing of a horse* (says Rymer), *or in the growling of a mastiff, there is a meaning, there is a lively expression, and, may I say, more humanity than many times in the tragical flights of Shakspeare.* The ignorance of

of which censure is of a piece with its brutality. The truth is, no one thought clearer, or argued more closely, than this immortal bard. But his superiority of genius less needing the intervention of words in the act of thinking, when he came to draw out his contemplations into discourse, he took up (as he was hurried on by the torrent of his matter) with the first words that lay in his way; and if, amongst these, there were two *mixed modes* that had but a principal idea in common, it was enough for him; he regarded them as synonymous, and would use the one for the other without fear or scruple.—Again, there have been others, such as the two last editors, who have fallen into a contrary extreme; and regarded Shakspeare's anomalies (as we may call them) amongst the corruptions of his text; which, therefore, they have cashiered in great numbers, to make room for a jargon of their own. This hath put me to additional trouble; for I had not only their interpolations to throw out again, but the genuine text to replace, and establish in its stead; which, in many cases, could not be done without shewing the peculiar sense of the terms, and explaining the causes which led the poet to so perverse an use of them. I had it once, indeed, in my design, to give a general alphabetick *glossary* of those terms; but as each of them is explained in its proper place, there seemed the less occasion for such an index.

2. The poet's hard and unnatural construction had a different original. This was the effect of mistaken



art and design. The publick taste was in its infancy ; and delighted (as it always does during that state) in the high and turgid ; which leads the writer to disguise a vulgar expression with hard and forced construction, whereby the sentence frequently becomes cloudy and dark. Here his criticks shew their modesty, and leave him to himself. For the arbitrary change of a word doth little towards dispelling an obscurity that ariseth, not from the licentious use of a single term, but from the unnatural arrangement of a whole sentence. And they risqued nothing by their silence. For Shakspeare was too clear in fame to be suspected of a want of meaning ; and too high in fashion for any one to own he needed a critick to find it out. Not but, in his best works, we must allow, he is often so natural and flowing, so pure and correct, that he is even a model for style and language.

3. As to his far-fetched and quaint allusions, these are often a cover to common thoughts ; just as his hard construction is to common expression. When they are not so, the explanation of them has this further advantage, that, in clearing the obscurity, you frequently discover some latent conceit not unworthy of his genius.

III. The third and last sort of notes is concerned in a critical explanation of the author's beauties and defects ; but chiefly of his beauties, whether in style, thought, sentiment, character, or composition. An odd humour of finding fault hath long prevailed  
amongst

amongst the criticks; as if nothing were worth remarking, that did not, at the same time, deserve to be reprov'd. Whereas the publick judgment hath less need to be assisted in what it shall reject, than in what it ought to prize; men being generally more ready at spying faults than in discovering beauties. Nor is the value they set upon a work, a certain proof that they understand it. For it is ever seen, that half a dozen voices of credit give the lead: and if the publick chance to be in good humour, or the author much in their favour, the people are sure to follow. Hence it is, that the true critick hath so frequently attached himself to works of established reputation; not to teach the world to *admire*, which, in those circumstances, to say the truth, they are apt enough to do of themselves; but to teach them how *with reason to admire*: no easy matter, I will assure you, on the subject in question: for though it be very true, as Mr. Pope hath observed, that *Shakspeare is the fairest and fullest subject for criticism*, yet it is not such a sort of criticism as may be rais'd mechanically on the rules which Dacier, Rapin, and Bossu, have collected from antiquity; and of which such kind of writers as Rymer, Gildon, Dennis, and Oldmixon, have only gathered and chewed the husks: nor, on the other hand, is it to be form'd on the plan of those crude and superficial judgments, on books and things, with which a certain celebrated paper \* so much abounds;

\* The Spectator. REED.

too good indeed to be named with the writers last mentioned, but being unluckily mistaken for a *model*, because it was an *original*, it hath given rise to a deluge of the worst sort of critical jargon; I mean that which looks most like sense. But the kind of criticism here required, is such as judgeth our author by those only laws and principles on which he wrote, NATURE, and COMMON-SENSE.

Our observations, therefore, being thus extensive, will, I presume, enable the reader to form a right judgment of this favourite poet, without drawing out his character, as was once intended, in a continued discourse.

These, such as they are, were among my younger amusements, when, many years ago, I used to turn over these sort of writers to unbend myself from more serious applications: and what certainly the publick at this time of day had never been troubled with, but for the conduct of the two last editors, and the persuasions of dear Mr. Pope; whose memory and name,

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~~semper acerbum,~~  
*Semper honoratum (sic Dī voluistis) habebo.*

He was desirous I should give a new edition of this poet, as he thought it might contribute to put a stop to a prevailing folly of altering the text of celebrated authors without talents or judgment. And he was willing that *his* edition should be melted down into  
*mine,*

*mine*, as it would, he said, afford him (so great is the modesty of an ingenuous temper) a fit opportunity of confessing his mistakes \*. In memory of our friendship, I have, therefore, made it our joint edition. His admirable preface is here added ; all his notes are given, with his name annexed ; the scenes are divided according to his regulation ; and the most beautiful passages distinguished, as in his book, with inverted commas. In imitation of him, I have done the same by as many others as I thought most deserving of the reader's attention, and have marked them with *double* commas.

If, from all this, Shakspeare or good letters have received any advantage, and the publick any benefit, or entertainment; the thanks are due to the *proprietors*, who have been at the expence of procuring this edition. And I should be unjust to several deserving men of a reputable and useful profession, 'if I did not, on this occasion, acknowledge the fair dealing I have always found amongst them ; and profess my sense of the unjust prejudice which lies against them ; whereby they have been, hitherto, unable to procure that security for their property, which they see the rest of their fellow-citizens enjoy. A prejudice in part arising from the frequent *piracies* (as they are called) committed by members of their own body. But such kind of members no body is without. And it would be hard that this should be turned to the discredit of the

\* See his Letters to me.

honest part of the profession, who suffer more from such injuries than any other men. It hath, in part too, arisen from the clamours of profligate scribblers, ever ready, for a piece of money, to prostitute their bad sense for or against any cause prophane or sacred; or in any scandal, publick or private: these meeting with little encouragement from men of account in the trade (who, even in this enlightened age, are not the very worst judges or rewarders of merit), apply themselves to people of condition; and support their importunities by false complaints against *Book-sellers*.

But I should now, perhaps, rather think of my own apology, than busy myself in the defence of others. I shall have some *Tartuffe* ready, on the first appearance of this edition, to call out again, and tell me, that *I suffer myself to be wholly diverted from my purpose by these matters less suitable to my clerical profession*. “Well, but (says a friend) why not take so candid an intimation in good part? Withdraw yourself again, as you are bid, into the clerical pale: examine the records of sacred and prophane antiquity; and, on them, erect a work to the confusion of infidelity.” Why, I have done all this, and more: and hear now what the same men have said to it. They tell me, *I have wrote to the wrong and injury of religion, and furnished out more handles for unbelievers*. “Oh! now the secret is out; and you may have your pardon, I find, upon easier terms. It is only to write no more.”——Good gentlemen! and shall I not oblige  
H them?

them? They would gladly *obstruct* my way to those things which every man, who *endeavours well* in his profession, must needs think he has some claim to, when he sees them given to those who never did *endeavour*; at the same time that they would *deter* me from taking those advantages which letters enable me to procure for myself. If then I am to write no more (though as much out of my profession as they may please to represent this work, I suspect their modesty would not insist on a scrutiny of our several applications of this prophane profit and their purer gains) if, I say, I am to write no more, let me at least give the publick, who have a better pretence to demand it of me, some reason for my presenting them with these amusements; which, if I am not much mistaken, may be excused by the best and fairest *examples*; and, what is more, may be justified on the surer *reason of things*.

The great Saint CHRYSOSTOM, a name consecrated to immortality by his virtue and eloquence, is known to have been so fond of Aristophanes, as to wake with him at his studies, and to sleep with him under his pillow: and I never heard that this was objected either to his piety or his preaching; not even in those times of pure zeal and primitive religion. Yet, in respect of Shakspeare's great sense, Aristophanes's best wit is but buffoonery; and, in comparison of Aristophanes's freedoms, Shakspeare writes with the purity of a vestal. But they will say, St. Chrysostom contracted a fondness for the comick

comick poet *for the sake of his Greek*. To this, indeed, I have nothing to reply. Far be it from me to insinuate so unscholarlike a thing, as if we had the same use for good English, that a Greek had for his Attick elegance. Critick Kuster, in a taste and language peculiar to grammarians of a certain order, hath decreed, that *the history and chronology of Greek words is the most SOLID entertainment of a man of letters*.

I fly then to a higher example, much nearer home, and still more in point, the famous university of OXFORD: This illustrious body, which hath long so justly held, and with such equity dispensed, the chief honours of the learned world, thought good letters so much interested in correct editions of the best English writers, that they, very lately, in their publick capacity, undertook *one* of this very author by subscription. And if the editor hath not discharged his task with suitable abilities for one so much honoured by them, this was not their fault, but his, who thrust himself into the employment. After such an example, it would be weakening any defence to seek further for authorities: All that can be now decently urged, is the *reason of the thing*; and this I shall do, more for the sake of that truly venerable body than my own.

Of all the literary exercitations of speculative men, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the world, there are none of so much importance, or what are more our immediate concern, than those which let us into the knowledge of our nature. Others may

exercise the reason, or amuse the imagination; but these only can improve the heart, and form the human mind to wisdom. Now, in this science, our Shakspeare is confessed to occupy the foremost place; whether we consider the amazing sagacity with which he investigates every hidden spring and wheel of human action; or his happy manner of communicating this knowledge, in the just and living paintings which he has given us of all our passions, appetites, and pursuits. These afford a lesson which can never be too often repeated, or too constantly inculcated; and, to engage the reader's due attention to it, hath been one of the principal objects of this edition.

As this science (whatever profound philosophers may think) is, to the rest, *in things*; so, *in words* (whatever supercilious pedants may talk), every one's mother tongue is to all other languages. This hath still been the sentiment of nature and true wisdom. Hence, the greatest men of antiquity never thought themselves better employed, than in cultivating their own country idiom. So Lycurgus did honour to Sparta, in giving the first complete edition of Homer; and Cicero to Rome, in correcting the works of Lucretius. Nor do we want examples of the same good sense in modern times, even amidst the cruel inroads that art and fashion have made upon nature and the simplicity of wisdom. Menage, the greatest name in France for all kinds of philologick learning, prided himself in writing critical notes on their best lyric poet, Malherbe:



Malherbe : and our greater Selden, when he thought it might reflect credit on his country, did not disdain even to comment a very ordinary poet, one Michael Drayton. But the English tongue, at this juncture, deserves and demands our particular regard. It hath, by means of the many excellent works of different kinds composed in it, engaged the notice, and become the study, of almost every curious and learned foreigner, so as to be thought even a part of literary accomplishment. This must needs make it deserving of a critical attention : and its being yet destitute of a test or standard to apply to, in cases of doubt or difficulty, shews how much it wants that attention. For we have neither GRAMMAR nor DICTIONARY, neither chart nor compass, to guide us through this wide sea of words. And indeed how should we ? since both are to be composed and finished on the authority of our best established writers. But their authority can be of little use, till the text hath been correctly settled, and the phraseology critically examined. As then, by these aids, a *Grammar* and *Dictionary*, planned upon the best rules of logick and philosophy (and none but such will deserve the name), are to be procured ; the forwarding of this will be a general concern : for, as Quintilian observes, "*Verbarum proprietates ac differentia omnibus, qui sermonem curæ habent, debet esse communis.*" By this way, the Italians have brought their tongue to a degree of purity and stability, which no living language ever attained unto before. It is with pleasure I observe, that these things now

begin to be understood among ourselves; and that I can acquaint the publick, we may soon expect very elegant editions of Fletcher, and *Milton's Paradise Lost* from gentlemen of distinguished abilities and learning. But this interval of good sense, as it may be short, is indeed but new. For I remember to have heard of a very learned man, who, not long since, formed a design of giving a more correct edition of Spenser; and, without doubt, would have performed it well; but he was dissuaded from his purpose by his friends, as beneath the dignity of a professor of the occult sciences. Yet these very friends, I suppose, would have thought it had added lustre to his high station, to have new-furnished out some dull northern chronicle, or dark Sibylline ænigma. But let it not be thought, that what is here said insinuates any thing to the discredit of Greek and Latin criticism. If the follies of particular men were sufficient to bring any branch of learning into disrepute, I do not know any that would stand in a worse situation than that for which I now apologize. For I hardly think there ever appeared, in any *learned* language, so execrable a heap of nonsense, under the name of commentaries, as hath been lately given us on a certain satirick poet, of the last age, by his editor and coadjutor\*.

I am sensible how unjustly the very best *classical* criticks have been treated. It is said, that our great

\* This alludes to Dr. Grey's edition of *Hudibras*, published in 1744. READ.

philosopher \* spoke with much contempt of the two finest scholars of this age, Dr. Bentley and Bishop Hare, for squabbling, as he expressed it, about an old play-book ; meaning, I suppose, Terence's comedies. But this story is unworthy of him : though well enough suiting the fanatick turn of the wild writer that relates it ; such censures are amongst the follies of men immoderately given over to one science, and ignorantly undervaluing all the rest. Those learned criticks might, and perhaps did, laugh in their turn (though still, sure, with the same indecency and indiscretion) at that incomparable man, for wearing out a long life in poring through a telescope. Indeed, the weaknesses of such are to be mentioned with reverence. But who can bear, without indignation, the fashionable cant of every trifling writer, whose insipidity passes, with himself, for politeness, for pretending to be shocked, forsooth, with the rude and savage air of *vulgar* criticks ; meaning such as Muretus, Scaliger, Casaubon, Salmasius, Spanheim, Bentley ! When, had it not been for the deathless labours of such as these, the western world, at the revival of letters, had soon fallen back again into a state of ignorance and barbarity, as deplorable as that from which Providence had just redeemed it.

\* Sir Isaac Newton. See Whiston's Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Clarke, 1748, 8vo. p. 113. REED.

To conclude with an observation of a fine writer and great philosopher of our own; which I would gladly bind, though with all honour, as a phylactery, on the brow of every awful grammarian, to teach him at once the *use* and *limits* of his art: WORDS ARE THE MONEY OF FOOLS, AND THE COUNTERS OF WISE MEN.

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# ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO

*Mr. STEEVENS's Edition of Twenty of the old  
Quarto Copies of SHAKSPERE, &c. in 4 Vols.  
8vo. 1766.*

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THE plays of SHAKSPERE have been so often republished, with every seeming advantage which the joint labours of men of the first abilities could procure for them, that one would hardly imagine they could stand in need of any thing beyond the illustration of some few dark passages. Modes of expression must remain in obscurity, or be retrieved from time to time, as chance may throw the books of that age into the hands of criticks who shall make a proper use of them. Many have been of opinion that his language will continue difficult to all those who are unacquainted with the provincial expressions which they suppose him to have used; but, for my own part, I cannot believe but that those which are now local may once have been universal, and must have been the language of those persons before whom his plays were represented.

However,

However, it is certain that the instances of obscurity from this source are very few.

Some have been of opinion that even a particular syntax prevailed in the time of Shakspeare; but, as I do not recollect that any proofs were ever brought in support of that sentiment, I own I am of the contrary opinion.

In his time, indeed, a different arrangement of syllables had been introduced in imitation of the Latin, as we find in Ascham; and the verb was very frequently kept back in the sentence; but in Shakspeare no marks of it are discernible: and though the rules of syntax were more strictly observed by the writers of that age, than they have been since, he of all the number is perhaps the most ungrammatical. To make his meaning intelligible to his audience seems to have been his only care, and with the ease of conversation he has adopted its incorrectness.

The past editors, eminently qualified as they were by genius and learning for this undertaking, wanted industry; to cover which they published catalogues, transcribed at random, of a greater number of old copies than ever they can be supposed to have had in their possession; when, at the same time, they never examined the few which we know they had, with any degree of accuracy. The last editor alone has dealt fairly with the world in this particular; he professes to have made use of no more than he had really seen, and has annexed a list of such to every play, together with a complete one of those supposed to be in being.

at

at the conclusion of his work, whether he had been able to procure them for the service of it, or not.

For these reasons I thought it would not be unacceptable to the lovers of Shakspeare to collate all the quartos I could find, comparing one copy with the rest, where there were more than one of the same play; and to multiply the chances of their being preserved, by collecting them into volumes, instead of leaving the few that have escaped, to share the fate of the rest, which was probably hastened by their remaining in the form of pamphlets, their use and value being equally unknown to those into whose hands they fell.

Of some I have printed more than one copy; as there are many persons, who, not contented with the possession of a finished picture of some great master, are desirous to procure the first sketch that was made for it, that they may have the pleasure of tracing the progress of the artist from the first light colouring to the finishing stroke. To such the earlier editions of *King John*, *Henry the Fifth*, *Henry the Sixth*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, will, I apprehend, not be unwelcome; since in these we may discern as much as will be found in the hasty outlines of the pencil, with a fair prospect of that perfection to which he brought every performance he took the pains to retouch.

The general character of the quarto editions may more advantageously be taken from the words of Mr. Pope, than from any recommendation of my own.

“ The folio edition (says he) in which all the plays  
 “ we now receive as his were first collected, was  
 “ published by two players, Heminge and Condell,  
 “ in 1623, seven years after his decease. They de-  
 “ clare that all the other editions were stolen and  
 “ surreptitious \*, and affirm theirs to be purged from  
 “ the errors of the former. This is true as to the  
 “ literal errors, and no other ; for in all respects else  
 “ it is far worse than the quartos.

“ First, because the additions of trifling and bom-  
 “ bast passages are in this edition far more nume-  
 “ rous. For whatever had been added since those  
 “ quartos by the actors, or had stolen from their  
 “ mouths into the written parts, were from thence  
 “ conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charg-  
 “ ed upon the author. He himself complained of  
 “ this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes *those who play*  
 “ *the clown would speak no more than is set down for them.*  
 “ (Act iii. Sc. iv.) But as a proof that he could  
 “ not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and*  
 “ *Juliet*, there is no hint of the mean conceits and  
 “ ribaldries now to be found there. In others, the  
 “ scenes of the mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are  
 “ vastly shorter than at present ; and I have seen one

\* It may be proper on this occasion to observe, that the actors printed several of the plays in their folio edition from the very quarto copies which they are here striving to depreciate ; and additional corruption is the utmost that these copies gained by passing through their hands.



“ in particular (which seems to have belonged to the  
“ play-house, by having the parts divided by lines,  
“ and the actors names in the margin) where several  
“ of those very passages were added in a written  
“ hand, which since are to be found in the folio.

“ In the next place, a number of beautiful passages  
“ were omitted, which were extant in the first single  
“ editions; as it seems without any other reason than  
“ their willingness to shorten some scenes.”

To this I must add, that I cannot help looking on the folio as having suffered other injuries from the licentious alteration of the players; as we frequently find in it an unusual word changed into one more popular; sometimes to the weakening of the sense, which rather seems to have been their work, who knew that plainness was necessary for the audience of an illiterate age, than that it was done by the consent of the author: for he would hardly have unnerved a line in his written copy, which they pretend to have transcribed, however he might have permitted many to have been familiarized in the representation. Were I to indulge my own private conjecture, I should suppose that his blotted manuscripts were read over by one to another among those who were appointed to transcribe them; and hence it would easily happen, that words of similar sound, though of senses directly opposite, might be confounded with each other. They themselves declare that Shakspeare's time of blotting was past, and yet half the errors we find in their edition could not be

merely typographical. Many of the quartos (as our own printers assure me) were far from being unskilfully executed, and some of them were much more correctly printed than the folio, which was published at the charge of the same proprietors, whose names we find prefixed to the older copies; and I cannot join with Mr. Pope in acquitting that edition of more literal errors than those which went before it. The particles in it seem to be as fortuitously disposed, and proper names as frequently undistinguished by Italic or capital letters from the rest of the text. The punctuation is equally accidental; nor do I see on the whole any greater marks of a skilful revisal, or the advantage of being printed from unblotted originals in the one, than in the other. One reformation indeed there seems to have been made, and that very laudable; I mean the substitution of more general terms for a name too often unnecessarily invoked on the stage; but no jot of obscenity is omitted: and their caution against prophaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the judgment of the editors of the folio\*.

\* "And their caution against prophaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the editors of the folio."

I doubt whether we are so much indebted to the judgment of the editors of the folio edition, for their caution against prophaneness, as to the statute, 3 Jac. I. c. 21. which prohibits, under severe penalties, the use of the sacred name in any plays or interludes. This occasioned the playhouse copies to be altered, and they printed from the playhouse copies. BLACKSTONE.

How much may be done by the assistance of the old copies will now be easily known; but a more difficult task remains behind, which calls for other abilities than are requisite in the laborious collator.

From a diligent perusal of the comedies of contemporary authors, I am persuaded that the meaning of many expressions in Shakspeare might be retrieved; for the language of conversation can only be expected to be preserved in works, which in their time assumed the merit of being pictures of men and manners. The style of conversation we may suppose to be as much altered as that of books; and, in consequence of the change, we have no other authorities to recur to in either case. Should our language ever be recalled to a strict examination, and the fashion become general of striving to maintain our old acquisitions, instead of gaining new ones, which we shall be at last obliged to give up, or be incumbered with their weight; it will then be lamented that no regular collection was ever formed of the old English books; from which, as from ancient repositories, we might recover words and phrases as often as caprice or wantonness should call for variety; instead of thinking it necessary to adopt new ones, or barter solid strength for feeble splendour, which no language has long admitted, and retained its purity.

We wonder that, before the time of Shakspeare, we find the stage in a state so barren of productions, but forget that we have hardly any acquaintance with the authors of that period, though some few of their

dramatick pieces may remain. The same might be almost said of the interval between that age and the age of Dryden, the performances of which, not being preserved in sets, or diffused as now, by the greater number printed, must lapse apace into the same obscurity.

*Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona:*

*Multi*—————

And yet we are contented, from a few specimens only, to form our opinions of the genius of ages gone before us. Even while we are blaming the taste of that audience which received with applause the worst plays in the reign of Charles the Second, we should consider that the few in possession of our theatre, which would never have been heard a second time had they been written now, were probably the best of hundreds which had been dismissed with general censure. The collection of plays, interludes, &c. made by Mr. Garrick, with an intent to deposit them hereafter in some public library \*, will be considered as a valuable acquisition; for pamphlets have never yet been examined with a proper regard to posterity. Most of the obsolete pieces will be found on inquiry to have been introduced into libraries but some few years since; and yet those of the present age, which may

\* This collection is now, in pursuance of Mr. Garrick's Will, placed in the British Museum. R. & D.

one time or other prove as useful, are still entirely neglected. I should be remiss, I am sure, were I to forget my acknowledgments to the gentleman I have just mentioned, to whose benevolence I owe the use of several of the scarcest quartos, which I could not otherwise have obtained; though I advertised for them, with sufficient offers, as I thought, either to attempt the casual owner to sell, or the curious to communicate them; but Mr. Garrick's zeal would not permit him to withhold any thing that might ever so remotely tend to shew the perfections of that author who could only have enabled him to display his own.

It is not merely to obtain justice to Shakspeare, that I have made this collection, and advise others to be made. The general interest of English literature, and the attention due to our own language and history, require that our ancient writings should be diligently reviewed. There is no age which has not produced some works that deserved to be remembered; and as words and phrases are only understood by comparing them in different places, the lower writers must be read for the explanation of the highest. No language can be ascertained and settled, but by deducting its words from their original sources, and tracing them through their successive varieties of signification; and this deduction can only be performed by consulting the earliest and intermediate authors,

Enough has been already done to encourage us to do more. Dr. Hickes, by reviving the study of the Saxon language, seems to have excited a stronger curiosity after old English writers, than ever had appeared before. Many volumes, which were mouldering in dust, have been collected; many authors, which were forgotten, have been revived; many laborious catalogues have been formed; and many judicious glossaries compiled: the literary transactions of the darker ages are now open to discovery; and the language in its intermediate gradations, from the Conquest to the Restoration, is better understood than in any former time.

To incite the continuance, and encourage the extension of this domestick curiosity, is one of the purposes of the present publication. In the plays it contains, the poet's first thoughts, as well as words, are preserved; the additions made in subsequent impressions distinguished in Italicks, and the performances themselves make their appearance with every typographical error, such as they were before they fell into the hands of the player-editors. The various readings, which can only be attributed to chance, are set down among the rest, as I did not chuse arbitrarily to determine for others which were useless, or which were valuable. And many words differing only by the spelling, or serving merely to shew the difficulties which they to whose lot it first fell to disentangle their perplexities must have encountered, are exhibited with the rest. I must acknowledge that some few readings have

have slipped in by mistake, which can pretend to serve no purpose of illustration, but were introduced by confining myself to note the minutest variations of the copies, which soon convinced me that the oldest were in general the most correct. Though no proof can be given that the poet superintended the publication of any one of these himself, yet we have little reason to suppose that he who wrote at the command of Elizabeth, and under the patronage of Southampton, was so very negligent of his fame, as to permit the most incompetent judges, such as the players were, to vary at their pleasure what he had set down for the first single editions; and we have better grounds for a suspicion, that his works did materially suffer from their presumptuous corrections after his death.

It is very well known, that before the time of Shakspeare, the art of making title-pages was practised with as much, or perhaps more success than it has been since. Accordingly, to all his plays we find long and descriptive ones, which, when they were first published, were of great service to the venders of them. Pamphlets of every kind were hawked about the streets by a set of people resembling his own *Autolycus*, who proclaimed aloud the qualities of what they offered to sale, and might draw in many a purchaser by the mirth he was taught to expect from *the humours of Corporal Nym*, or *the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll*, who was not to be tempted by the representation

tation of a fact merely historical. The players, however, laid aside the whole of this garniture, not finding it so necessary to procure success to a bulky volume, when the author's reputation was established, as it had been to bespeak attention to a few straggling pamphlets while it was yet uncertain.

The sixteen plays, which are not in these volumes, remained unpublished till the folio in the year 1623, though the compiler of a work, called *Theatrical Records*, mentions different single editions of them all before that time. But as no one of the editors could ever meet with such, nor has any one else pretended to have seen them, I think myself at liberty to suppose the compiler supplied the defects of the list out of his own imagination; since he must have had singular and good fortune to have been possessed of two or three different copies of all, when neither editors nor collectors, in the course of near fifty years, have been able so much as to obtain the sight of one of the number \*.

At

\* It will be obvious to every one acquainted with the ancient English language, that in almost all the titles of plays in this catalogue of Mr. *William Rufus Chetwood*, the spelling is constantly overcharged with such a superfluity of letters as is not to be found in the writings of Shakspeare or his contemporaries. A more bungling attempt at a forgery was never obruded on the publick. See the *British Theatre* 1750; reprinted by Dodsley in 1756, under the title of "*Theatrical Records, or an Account of English Dramatick*  
Authors,



At the end of the last volume I have added a tragedy of *King Lear*, published before that of Shakspeare, which it is not improbable he might have seen, as the father kneeling to the daughter, when she kneels to ask his blessing, is found in it; a circumstance two poets were not very likely to have hit on separately; and which seems borrowed by the latter with his usual judgment, it being the most natural passage in the whole play; and is introduced in such a manner, as to make it fairly his own. The ingenious editor of *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* having never met with this play, and as it is not preserved in Mr. Garrick's collection, I thought it a curiosity worthy the notice of the publick.

I have likewise reprinted Shakspeare's *Sonnets* from a copy published in 1609, by G. Eld, one of the printers of his plays; which, added to the consideration that they made their appearance with his name, and in his lifetime, seems to be no slender proof of their authenticity. The same evidence might operate in favour of several more plays which are omitted here, out of respect to the judgment of those who had omitted them before\*.

"Authors, and their Works," where all that is said concerning an advertisement at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1697, is equally false, no copy of that play having been ever published by *Andrew Wise*.

\* *Locrine*, 1595. *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600. *London Prodigal*, 1605. *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, 1609. *Puritan*, 1600. *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, 1613. *Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608.

It is to be wished that some method of publication, most favourable to the character of an author, were once established ; whether we are to send into the world all his works without distinction, or arbitrarily to leave out what may be thought a disgrace to him. The first editors, who rejected *Pericles*, retained *Titus Andronicus* ; and Mr. Pope, without any reason, named *The Winter's Tale*, a play that bears the strongest marks of the hand of Shakspeare, among those which he supposed to be spurious. Dr. Warburton has fixed a stigma on the three parts of *Henry the Sixth*, and some others :

*Inde Dolabella est, atque hinc Antonius ;*

and all have been willing to plunder Shakspeare, or mix up a *breed of barren metal* with his purest ore.

Joshua Barnes, the editor of Euripides, thought every scrap of his author so sacred, that he has preserved, with the name of one of his plays, the only remaining word of it. The same reason indeed might be given in his favour, which caused the preservation of that valuable trisyllable : which is, that it cannot be found in any other place in the Greek language. But this does not seem to have been his only motive, as we find he has to the full as carefully published several detached and broken sentences, the gleanings from scholiasts, which have no claim to merit of that kind ; and yet the author's works might be reckoned by some to be incomplete without them.

them. If then this duty is expected from every editor of a Greek or Roman poet, why is not the same insisted on in respect of an English classick? But if the custom of preserving all, whether worthy of it or not, be *more honoured in the breach than the observance*, the suppression at least should not be considered as a fault. The publication of such things as Swift had written, merely to raise a laugh among his friends, has added something to the bulk of his works, but very little to his character as a writer. The four volumes \* that came out since Dr. Hawkesworth's edition, not to look on them as a tax levied on the publick (which I think one might without injustice), contain not more than sufficient to have made one of real value; and there is a kind of dissingenuity, not to give it a harsher title, in exhibiting what the author never meant should see the light; for no motive, but a sordid one, 'can betray the survivors to make that publick, which they themselves must be of opinion will be unfavourable to the memory of the dead.

Life does not often receive good unmixed with evil. The benefits of the art of printing are depraved by the facility with which scandal may be diffused, and secrets revealed; and by the temptation by which traffick solicits avarice to betray the

\* Volumes XIII. XIV. XV. and XVI. in large 8vo. Nine more have since been added. REXD.

weaknesses of passion, or the confidence of friendship.

I cannot forbear to think these posthumous publications injurious to society. A man conscious of literary reputation will grow in time afraid to write with tenderness to his sister, or with fondness to his child ; or to remit on the slightest occasion, or most pressing exigence, the rigour of critical choice, and grammatical severity. That esteem which preserves his letters will at last produce his disgrace ; when that which he wrote to his friend or his daughter shall be laid open to the publick.

There is perhaps sufficient evidence, that most of the plays in question, unequal as they may be to the rest, were written by Shakspeare ; but the reason generally given for publishing the less correct pieces of an author, that it affords a more impartial view of a man's talents or way of thinking, than when we only see him in form, and prepared for our reception, is not enough to condemn an editor who thinks and practises otherwise. For what is all this to shew, but that every man is more dull at one time than another ; a fact which the world would easily have admitted, without asking any proofs in its support that might be destructive to an author's reputation.

To conclude ; if the work, which this publication was meant to facilitate, has been already performed, the satisfaction of knowing it to be so may be obtained from hence ; if otherwise, let those who raised expectations of correctness, and through negligence  
defeated

defeated them, be justly exposed by future editors, who will now be in possession of by far the greatest part of what they might have inquired after for years to no purpose ; for in respect of such a number of the old quartos as are here exhibited, the first folio is a common book. This advantage will at least arise, that future editors, having equally recourse to the same copies, can challenge distinction and preference only by genius, capacity, industry, and learning.

As I have only collected materials for future artists, I consider what I have been doing as no more than an apparatus for their use. If the publick is inclined to receive it as such, I am amply rewarded for my trouble ; if otherwise, I shall submit with cheerfulness to the censure which should equitably fall on an injudicious attempt ; having this consolation, however, that my design amounted to no more than a wish to encourage others to think of preserving the oldest editions of the English writers, which are growing scarcer every day ; and to afford the world all the assistance or pleasure it can receive from the most authentick copies extant of its NOBLEST POET.

G. S.

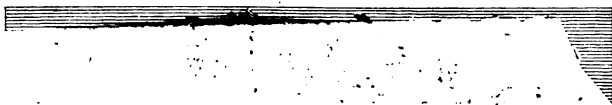
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DR. JOHNSON'S  
P R E F A C E.

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THAT praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox ; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard, which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance ; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence ; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of



# THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY  
JOSEPH NEALE

VOLUME I

BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY

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NEW-YORK: PUBLISHED BY

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SAMUEL JOHNSON. L.L.D.





of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance; and, when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientific, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared; and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so, in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect: but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence. but by remarking, that nation after nation, and cen-

tury after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new-name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted, arises, therefore, not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost ; and every topick of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which he modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end ; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished ; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives ; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity ; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained : yet, thus-unassisted by interest or passion, they

they have past through variations of taste and change of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakspeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted; and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakspeare is, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and

speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakspeare it is commonly a species,

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakspeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakspeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and æconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shewn in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenor of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakspeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakspeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled  
by

by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered; is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions; and as it has no greater influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity,

Characters, thus ample and general, were not easily discriminated and preserved; yet perhaps no poet ever kept

kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristic; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakspeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakspeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen; but, if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said, that he has not only shewn human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but



as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakspeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakspeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and, if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or Kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to shew an usurper and a murderer not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like  
other

other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick stenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakspeare's plays are not, in the rigorous and critical sense, either tragedies or comedies; but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion, and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties, the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*,  
compositions

compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect, among the Greeks or Romans, a single writer who attempted both.

Shakspeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow, not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters; and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes, both in its alterations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by shewing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience

rience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us; and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished

guished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra*, than in the history of *Richard the Second*. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakspeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakspeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two centinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful; and the Grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakspeare engaged in dramattick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such autho-

rity as might restrain his extravagance; he therefore indulged his natural disposition; and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comick scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy, for the greater part, by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

✓ The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution, from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable: the adventitious peculiarities of personable habits are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature: they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance  
which

which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakspeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered; this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hopes of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness, and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakspeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly

without ruggedness or difficulty ; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation : his characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable ; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakspeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall shew them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown ; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings, indeed, a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally ; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him ; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked ; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate ; for it is always a writer's duty  
to



to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced, or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothick mythology of fairies. Shakspeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology; for, in the same age, Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with

the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comic scenes, he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve; yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy, his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration, he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramattick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress

progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakspeare found it an incumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations, or set speeches, are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and, instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to shew how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and, if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle; or the image always great where the line is bulky; the quality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions

tions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakspeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge, or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: but, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled; he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it; for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakspeare is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shewn no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The critics hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time, therefore, to tell him by the authority of Shakspeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramattick fable, in its materiality, was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria; and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumspections of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind, thus wandering in ecstasy, should  
count

count the clock; or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They came to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a tory may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a moderate theatre.

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it, that  
nothing



nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited? It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility, than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider how we should be pleased with such

fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of *Henry the Fifth*, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramattick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice, or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato?

A play read affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass, in an hour, the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakspeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the

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the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules, merely positive, become the comprehensive genius of Shakspeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire:

*Non usque adeo permiscuit imis  
Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli  
Serventur leges, malint à Cæsare tolli.*

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramatick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these perhaps have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of super-

fluuous and ostentatious art, by which is shewn, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength: but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life.

Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frightened at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as Æneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakspeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to a reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the inquiry, how far man may extend his

his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much is to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakspeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly, Linacre, and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people, newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows

not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity ; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. *The Death of Arthur* was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play, which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of *Palmerin* and *Guy of Warwick*, have made little impression ; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions ; and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels ; and it is reasonable to suppose, that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more ; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authors, were in his time accessible and familiar. The fable of *As You Like It*, which is supposed to be copied  
from

from *Chaucer's Gamelyn*, was a little pamphlet of those times ; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of *Hamlet* in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in *Saxo-Grammaticus*.

His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads ; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects ; he dilated some of Plutarch's lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation ; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakspeare than of any other writer : others please us by particular speeches ; but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has, perhaps, excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle, with which his plays abound, have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited, had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminated

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events,

events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find, that on our stage something must be done as well as said; and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets; and Shakspeare, of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but *Othello* is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of *Cato*, but we think on *Addison*.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers; the composition of Shakspeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, inter-



spersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakspeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in inexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakspeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakspeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Johnson, his friend, affirms, that *he had small Latin, and less Greek*; who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakspeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined, that they have discovered deep learning in many imitations of old writers; but the examples which I have known urged were drawn from books translated in his time; or were such easy coincidences of thought, as will happen to all who consider

consider the same subjects; or such remarks on life, or axioms of morality, as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked, that in this important sentence, *Go before, I'll follow*, we read a translation of, *I præ, sequar*. I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, *I cry'd to sleep again*, the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication; and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The *Comedy of Errors* is confessedly taken from the *Menachmi* of *Plautus*; from the only play of *Plautus* which was then in English. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes, proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, he is observed to have followed the  
English

English translation, where it deviates from the Italian; but this, on the other part, proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authors have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then high in esteem, I am inclined to believe, that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope, but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakspeare must not be content to study him in the closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is, however, proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authors were translated, and some of the Greek; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topics

picks of human disquisition had found English writers ; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness ; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. Shakspeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known ; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion, that *perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works ; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for aught I know, says he, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best.* But the power of nature is only the power of using, to any certain purpose, the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and, when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakspeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned ; and, as he  
must

must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation, and accuracy of distinction, which books and precepts cannot confer; from this, almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakspeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which shewed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man, had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those inquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty, were yet unattempted. The tales, with which the

infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleanings his own remarks, by mingling, as he could, in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. Shakspeare had no such advantage; he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time, by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life, that appear very little favourable to thought, or to inquiry: so many, that he who considers them, is inclined to think that he sees enterprize and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakspeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, *as dew-drops from a lion's mane.*

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to shew them in full view by proper combinations.

combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has been himself imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted whether, from all his successors, more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed, that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just; their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another; and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakspeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shews plainly, that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakspeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the characters, the language, and the shows of the English drama are his. *He seems, says Dennis, to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trissyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroic harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use, makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.*

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in *Gorboduc*, which is confessedly before our author; yet in *Hieronymo*\*, of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

\* It appears, from the induction of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew-Fair*, to have been acted before the year 1590.



To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours, indeed, commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed, that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loath or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies, which shew that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence, but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am indeed far from thinking, that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of

fame than Shakspeare, rise much above the standard of their own age ; to add a little to what is best, will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear, that Shakspeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect, than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end ; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity, which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect, that of Congreve's four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which, perhaps, never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little *declined into the vale of years*, before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakspeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death ; and the few which appeared in his life, are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed; the negligence and unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shewn. The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages, perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities ; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened without the concurrence of many causes. The style of Shakspeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed, and obscure ; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them ; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errors ; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors,

for

for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.

In this state they remained, not as Dr. Warburton supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of English printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by Rowe; not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for Rowe seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation; but that our author's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and commendatory preface. Rowe has been clamorously blamed for not performing what he did not undertake; and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing, that though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errors, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious expositions of the new reading, and self-congratulations on the happiness of discovering,

As of the other editors I have preserved the prefaces, I have likewise borrowed the author's life from Rowe, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates, however, what is now to be known,  
and

and therefore deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. Rowe's performance, when Mr. Pope made them acquainted with the true state of Shakspeare's text, shewed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. Warburton for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgment of his own; the plays which he received, were given by Heminge and Condell, the first editors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during Shakspeare's life, with his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the later printers.

This is a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of *the dull duty of an editor*. He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull; yet, like other tedious tasks, is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from

from dulness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise, has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude, that their powers are universal. Pope's edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended, when he was found to have left any thing for others to do, that he passed the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost ; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and justness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his author, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

Pope

. Pope was succeeded by Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsick splendour of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errors. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

. In his reports of copies and editions, he is not to be trusted without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio as of middle authority; but the truth is, that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his achievement. The exuberant excrescence of his diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over Pope and Rowe I have sometimes suppressed,

pressed, and his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed; but I have in some places shewn him, as he would have shewn himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicit favour, against those who command reverence; and so easily is he praised, whom no man can envy.

Our author fell then into the hands of Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Oxford editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which dispatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large; and he is often learned without shew. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar what he could not be sure that his author intended to be grammatical. Shakspeare regarded more the

series



series of ideas, than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.)

Hammer's case of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measure reformed in so many passages, by the silent labours of some editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the licence, which had already been carried so far without reprehension; and of his corrections in general, it must be confessed, that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence indeed, both in himself and others, was too great; he supposes all to be right that was done by Pope and Theobald; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility; and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful inquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning; but

he cannot be justly offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardour of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant error of his commentary, is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected those, against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose, the author himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve;  
but

but I am sure without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of inquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects, that great part of the labour of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system, is to demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments upon an author, is to shew how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus sometimes truth and error, and sometimes contrarieties of error, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge, which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence, which for a while appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grop their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of know-

ledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may surely be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authors. How canst thou beg for life, says Homer's hero to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must, another day, be suffered by Achilles?

Dr. Warburton had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authors of *The canons of criticism*, and of *The revision of Shakspeare's text*; of which one ridicules his errors with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more; the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him. When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of *Coriolanus*, who was afraid that *girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle*; when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in *Macbeth*:

*A falcon tow'ring in his pride of place,  
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.*

Let

Let me however do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar\*. They have both shewn acuteness sufficient in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. Warburton's edition, *Critical Observations on Shakspeare* had been published by Mr. Upton†, a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius, or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart is expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a

\* It is extraordinary that this gentleman should attempt so voluminous a work, as *The Revisal of Shakspeare's text*, when he tells us in his preface, "he was not so fortunate as to be furnished with either of the folio editions, much less any of the ancient quartos: and even Sir Thomas Hanmer's performance was known to him only by Dr. Warburton's representation." FARMER.

† Republished by him in 1748, after Dr. Warburton's edition, with alterations, &c. STEEVENS.

theorist, and the laborious collator at some unlucky moment frolicks in conjecture.

*Critical, historical, and explanatory notes* have been likewise published upon Shakspeare by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old English writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook he has well enough performed; but as he neither attempts judicial nor emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty, who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say, with great sincerity, of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left Shakspeare without improvement; nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them, it was my intention to refer to its original author, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed, when I wrote it, to be my own. In some perhaps I have been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the remarks of any other commentator, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another.

another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither property nor liberty; nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But whether it be, that *small things make mean men proud*, and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentators a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: that to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate of a name is appended to it. A commentator has indeed great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are re-  
marked:

marked : or emendatory, by which depravations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess, that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought it my duty to facilitate their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience ; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my author's meaning accessible to many, who before were frightened from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The complete explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecoverably obliterated ; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, such as modes of dress,



dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial, that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none as much; but when an author has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration, communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will perhaps hereafter be explained, having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks, or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to an editor nothing is a trifle by which his author is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more, and some fewer judicial observations, not in proportion to their difference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find

or make, than in what we receive. Judgment, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table-book. Some initiation is however necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have therefore shewn so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of the plays I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence; in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and therefore it is to be supposed, that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in these which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention, having been first drawn by the violence of the contention between Pope and Theobald, has been continued by the persecution, which, with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of Shakspeare.

That

That many passages have passed in a state of deprecation through all the editions is indubitably certain; of these the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies, or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher I have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as in my opinion sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and defence; and some which seemed specious, but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands I have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages to stand unauthorized, and  
contented

contented themselves with Rowe's regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authors free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure; on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But ~~this practice~~ I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations, which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text; sometimes, where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. For  
though

though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgment of the first publishers, yet they who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who read it only by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mistakes by ignorance or negligence, and that, therefore something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and, where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed, have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice through which light can find its way; nor would Huetius himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen, than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled

mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play; but few, if any, of our author's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time, or change of place. A pause makes a new act. In every real, and therefore in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This Shakspeare knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and at first printed in one unbroken continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences? Whatever could be done by adjusting points, is therefore silently performed, in some plays, with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes, which the other editors have done always, and which indeed the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their ignorance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier, or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day increases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed, or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, and shewing, from all that goes before, and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of

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the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and perhaps done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always suspected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much labour appear to be right. The justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, *Quod dubitas ne feceris*.

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye so many critical adventures ended in miscarriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page wit struggling with its own sophistry, and learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emendations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be by some other editor defended and established.

*Criticks I saw, that other's names efface,  
And fix their own, with labour, in the place;*

*Their*



*Their own, like others, soon their place resign'd,  
Or disappear'd, and left the first behind.* POPE.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others or himself, if it be considered, that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of error is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best, he produces perhaps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it,

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study, that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the bishop of Aleria to English Bentley. The criticks on ancient authors have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of Shakspeare is condemn'd to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages,

whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that Homer has fewer passages unintelligible than Chaucer. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet Scaliger could confess to Salmasius how little satisfaction his emendations gave him. *Illudunt nobis conjecturæ nostræ, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores codices incidimus.* And Lipsius could complain, that criticks were making faults, by trying to remove them, *Ut olim vitiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur.* And, indeed, where mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of Scaliger and Lipsius, notwithstanding their wonderful sagacity and érudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or Theobald's.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the publick expectations, which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In

many

many I have failed, like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but, where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done; or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakspeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue, and his interest in the fable; and, when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects

suspects not why ; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed ; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and in its true proportions ; a close approach shews the smaller niceties ; but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him : while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood ; yet then did Dryden pronounce, " that Shakspeare was the man, " who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, " had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All " the images of nature were still present to him, and " he drew them not laboriously, but luckily : when " he describes any thing, you more than see it, you " feel it too. Those, who accuse him to have wanted " learning, give him the greater commendation : he " was naturally learned : he needed not the spectacles " of books to read nature ; he looked inwards, and " found her there, I cannot say he is every where " alike ; were he so, I should do him injury to " compare him with the greatest of mankind, He is " many times flat and insipid ; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into " bombast.

“ bombast. But he is always great, when some great  
 “ occasion is presented to him : no man can say, he  
 “ ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then  
 “ raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

“ *Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.*”

It is to be lamented, that such a writer should want a commentary ; that his language should become obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human things ; that which must happen to all, has happened to Shakspeare, by accident and time ; and more than has been suffered by any other writer since the use of types, has been suffered by him through his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that superiority of mind, which despised its own performances, when it compared them with its powers, and judged those works unworthy to be preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferior fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick ; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

Of

Of what has been performed in this revision, an account is given in the following pages by Mr. Steevens, who might have spoken both of his own diligence and sagacity, in terms of greater self-approbation, without deviating from modesty or truth.

JOHNSON.

MR.

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MR. STEEVENS'S  
ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO  
THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE want of adherence to the old copies, which has been complained of, in the text of every modern republication of Shakspeare, is fairly deducible from Mr. Rowe's inattention to one of the first duties of an editor\*. Mr. Rowe did not print from the earliest

\* "I must not (says Mr. Rowe in his dedication to the duke of Somerset) pretend to have restored this work to the exactness of the author's original manuscripts; those are lost, or, at least, are gone beyond any inquiry I could make; so that there was nothing left, but to *compare the several editions*, and give the true reading, as well as I could, from thence. This I have endeavoured to do pretty carefully, and rendered very many places intelligible, that were not so before. In some of the editions, especially the last, there were many lines (and in Hamlet one whole scene) left out together; these are now all supplied. I fear your grace will find some faults, but, I hope, they are mostly literal, and the errors of the press." Would not any one, from this declaration, suppose that Mr. Rowe (who does not appear to have consulted a single quarto) had at least *compared* the folios with each other?

and

and most correct, but from the most remote and inaccurate of the four folios. Between the years 1623 and 1685 (the dates of the first and last) the errors in every play, at least, were trebled. Several pages in each of these ancient editions have been examined, that the assertion might come more fully supported. It may be added, that as every fresh editor continued to make the text of his predecessor the ground-work of his own (never collating but where difficulties occurred) some deviations from the originals had been handed down, the number of which are lessened in the impression before us, as it has been constantly compared with the most authentick copies, whether collation was absolutely necessary for the recovery of sense, or not. The person who undertook this task, may have failed by inadvertency, as well as those who preceded him; but the reader may be assured, that he, who thought it his duty to free an author from such modern and unnecessary innovations, as had been censured in others, has not ventured to introduce any of his own.

It is not pretended, that a complete body of various readings is here collected; or that all the diversities, which the copies exhibit, are pointed out; as near two-thirds of them are typographical mistakes, or such a change of insignificant particles, as would crowd the bottom of the page with an ostentation of materials, from which, at last, nothing useful could be selected,



The dialogue might, indeed, sometimes be lengthened by other insertions than have hitherto been made, but without advantage either to its spirit or beauty; as in the following instance :

*Lear.* No.

*Kent.* Yes.

*Lear.* No, I say.

*Kent.* I say, yea.

Here the quartos add :

*Lear.* No, no, they would not.

*Kent.* Yes, they have.

By the admission of this negation and affirmation, has any new idea been gained ?

The labours of preceding editors have not left room for a boast, that many valuable readings have been retrieved; though it may be fairly asserted, that the text of Shakspeare is restored to the condition in which the author, or rather his first publishers, appear to have left it, such emendations as were absolutely necessary, alone admitted : for where a particle, indispensably necessary to the sense, was wanting, such a supply has been silently adopted from other editions ; but where a syllable, or more, had been added for the sake of the metre only, which, at first, might have been irregular, such interpolations are here constantly retrenched, sometimes with, and sometimes without notice.

notice. Those speeches, which in the older editions are printed as prose, and from their own construction are incapable of being compressed into verse, without the aid of supplemental syllables, are restored to prose again; and the measure is divided afresh in others, where the mass of words had been inharmoniously separated into lines.

The scenery, throughout all the plays, is regulated in conformity to a rule, which the poet, by his general practice, seems to have proposed to himself. Several of his pieces are come down to us, divided into scenes as well as acts. These divisions were probably his own, as they are made on settled principles, which would hardly have been the case, had the task been executed by the players. A change of scene, with Shakspeare, most commonly implies a change of place, but always an entire evacuation of the stage. The custom of distinguishing every entrance or exit by a fresh scene, was adopted, perhaps very idly, from the French theatre.

For the length of many notes, and the accumulation of examples in others, some apology may be likewise expected. An attempt at brevity is often found to be the source of an imperfect explanation. Where a passage has been constantly misunderstood, or where the jest or pleasantry has been suffered to remain long in obscurity, more instances have been brought to clear the one, or elucidate the other, than appear at first sight to have been necessary. For these, it can only be said, that when they prove that phraseology

or source of merriment to have been once general, which at present seems particular, they are not quite impertinently intruded ; as they may serve to free the author from a suspicion of having employed an affected singularity of expression, or indulged himself in allusions to transient customs, which were not of sufficient notoriety to deserve ridicule or reprehension. When examples in favour of contradictory opinions are assembled, though no attempt is made to decide on either part, such neutral collections should always be regarded as materials for future criticks, who may hereafter apply them with success. Authorities, whether in respect of words, or things, are not always producible from the most celebrated writers\*, yet such

\* Mr. T. Warton, in his excellent *Remarks on the Fairy Queen of Spenser*, offers a similar apology for having introduced illustrations from obsolete literature. " I fear (says he) I shall be censured for quoting too many pieces of this sort. But experience has fatally proved, that the commentator on Spenser, Jonson, and the rest of our elder poets, will in vain give specimens of his classical erudition, unless, at the same time, he brings to his work a mind intimately acquainted with those books, which, though now forgotten, were yet in common use and high repute about the time in which his authors respectively wrote, and which they consequently must have read. While these are unknown, many allusions and many imitations will either remain obscure, or lose half their beauty and propriety: " as the figures vanish when the canvas is decayed."

such circumstances as fall below the notice of history, can only be sought in the jest-book, the satire, or the play; and the novel, whose fashion did not out-live a week, is sometimes necessary to throw light on those annals which take in the compass of an age. Those, therefore, who would wish to have the peculiarities of Nym familiarized to their ideas, must excuse the insertion of such an epigram as best suits the purpose,

“Pope laughs at Theobald for giving us, in his edition of SHAKSPERE, a sample of

—all such READING as was never read.

But these strange and ridiculous books which Theobald quoted, were unluckily the very books which SHAKSPERE himself had studied; the knowledge of which enabled that useful editor to explain so many difficult allusions and obsolete customs in his poet, which otherwise could never have been understood. For want of this sort of literature, Pope tells us that the *dreadful Sagittary* in *Troilus and Cressida*, signifies Teucer, so celebrated for his skill in archery. Had he deigned to consult an old history, called the *Destruction of Troy*, a book which was the delight of SHAKSPERE and of his age, he would have found, that this formidable archer was no other than an imaginary beast, which the Grecian army brought against Troy. If SHAKSPERE is worth reading, he is worth explaining; and the researches used for so valuable and elegant a purpose, merit the thanks of genius and candour, not the satire of prejudice and ignorance. That labour, which so essentially contributes to the service of true taste, deserves a more honourable repository than *The Temple of Dulness*.”

however

however tedious in itself; and such as would be acquainted with the propriety of Falstaff's allusion to *stewed prunes*, should not be disgusted at a multitude of instances, which, when the point is once known to be established, may be diminished by any future editor. An author, who *catches* (as Pope expresses it) at the *Cynthia of a minute*, and does not furnish notes to his own works, is sure to lose half the praise which he might have claimed, had he dealt in allusions less temporary, or cleared up for himself those difficulties which lapse of time must inevitably create.

The author of the additional notes has rather been desirous to support old readings, than to claim the merit of introducing new ones. He desires to be regarded as one, who found the task he undertook more arduous than it seemed, while he was yet feeding his vanity with the hopes of introducing himself to the world as an editor in form. He, who has discovered in himself the power to rectify a few mistakes with ease, is naturally led to imagine, that all difficulties must yield to the efforts of future labour; and, perhaps, feels a reluctance to be undeceived at last.

Mr. Steevens desires it may be observed, that he has strictly complied with the terms exhibited in his proposals, having appropriated all such assistances, as he received, to the use of the present editor, whose judgment has, in every instance, determined on their respective merits. While he enumerates his obligations to his correspondents, it is necessary that one

comprehensive remark should be made on such communications as are omitted in this edition, though they might have proved of great advantage to a more daring commentator. The majority of these were founded on the supposition, that Shakspeare was, originally, an author correct in the utmost degree, but maimed and interpolated by the neglect or presumption of the players. In consequence of this belief, alterations have been proposed wherever a verse could be harmonized, an epithet exchanged for one more apposite, or a sentiment rendered less perplexed. Had the general current of advice been followed, the notes would have been filled with attempts at emendation, apparently unnecessary, though sometimes elegant, and as frequently with explanations of what none would have thought difficult. A constant peruser of Shakspeare will suppose whatever is easy to his own apprehension, will prove so to that of others, and consequently may pass over some real perplexities in silence. On the contrary, if in consideration of the different abilities of every class of readers, he should offer a comment on all harsh inversions of phrase, or peculiarities of expression, he will at once excite the disgust and displeasure of such as think their own knowledge or sagacity undervalued. It is difficult to fix a medium between doing too little and too much in the task of mere explanation. There are yet many passages unexplained and unintelligible, which may be reformed, at hazard of whatever licence, for exhibitions on the stage, in which the pleasure of  
the

the audience is chiefly to be considered ; but must remain untouched by the critical editor, whose conjectures are limited by narrow bounds, and who gives only what he at least supposes his author to have written.

If it is not to be expected that each vitiated passage in Shakspeare can be restored, till a greater latitude of experiment shall be allowed ; so neither can it be supposed that the force of all his allusions will be pointed out, till such books are thoroughly examined, as cannot easily at present be collected, if at all. Several of the most correct lists of our dramatick pieces exhibit the titles of plays, which are not to be met with in the completest collections. It is almost unnecessary to mention any other than Mr. Garrick's, which, curious and extensive as it is, derives its greatest value from its accessibility\*.

To

\* There is reason to think, that about the time of the Reformation, great numbers of plays were printed, though few of that age are now to be found ; for part of queen Elizabeth's INJUNCTIONS in 1559, are particularly directed to the suppressing of " many pamphlets, PLAYES, and ballads : that no manner of person shall enterprize to print any such, &c. but under certain restrictions." Vide Sect. V. This observation is taken from Dr. Percy's Additions to his Essay on the Origin of the English Stage. It appears, likewise, from a page at the conclusion of the second volume of the entries belonging to the Stationers' company, that in the 41st year of queen Elizabeth, many new restraints

To the other evils of our civil war must be added the interruption of polite learning, and the suppression of many dramattick and poetical names, which were plunged in obscurity by tumults and revolutions, and  
have

straints on booksellers were laid. Among these are the following, "That no plaies be printed, excepte they bee allowed by such as have auctoritie." The records of the Stationers, however, contain the entries of some which have never yet been met with by the most successful collectors; nor are their titles to be found in any registers of the stage, whether ancient or modern. It should seem, from the same volumes, that it was customary for the Stationers to seize the whole impression of any work that had given offence, and burn it publickly at their hall, in obedience to the edicts of the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of London, who sometimes enjoyed these literary executions at their respective palaces. Among other works condemned to the flames by these discerning prelates, were the complete satires of bishop Hall.

Mr. Theobald, at the conclusion of the preface to his first edition of Shakspeare, asserts, that, exclusive of the dramas of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, he had read "above 800 of old English plays." He omitted this assertion, however, on the republication of the same work, and, I hope, he did so, through a consciousness of its utter falsehood; for, if we except the plays of the authors already mentioned, it would be difficult to discover half the number, that were written early enough to serve the purpose for which he pretends to have perused this imaginary stock of ancient literature,

I might



have never since attracted curiosity. The utter neglect of ancient English literature continued so long, that many books may be supposed to be lost; and that curiosity, which has been now for some years increasing among us, wants materials for its operations. Books and pamphlets, printed originally in small numbers, being thus neglected, were soon destroyed; and though the capital authors were preserved, they were preserved to languish without regard. How little Shakspeare himself was once read, may be understood from Tate\*, who, in his dedication to the altered play

I might add, that the private collection of Mr. Theobald, which, including the plays of Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakspeare, did not amount to many more than an hundred, remained entire, in the hands of the late Mr. Tonson, till the time of his death. It does not appear, that any other collection but the Harleian, was at that time formed; nor does Mr. Theobald's edition contain any intrinsick evidences of so comprehensive an examination of our eldest dramattick writers, as he assumes to himself the merit of having made.

\* In the year 1707, Mr. N. Tate published a tragedy called *Injured Love, or the Cruel Husband*, and in the title-page of it calls himself, "Author of the tragedy called *King Lear*."

In a book called *The Actor, or a Treatise on the Art of Playing*, 12mo. published in 1750, and imputed to Dr. Hill, is the following pretended extract from *Romeo and Juliet*, with the author's remark on it:

"The

play of *King Lear*, speaks of the original, as of an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend ; and the author of the *Tatler*, having occasion to quote a few lines out of *Macbeth*, was content to receive them from

“ The saints that heard our vows, and know our love,  
 “ Seeing thy faith and thy unspotted truth,  
 “ Will sure take care, and let no wrongs annoy thee.  
 “ Upon my knees I'll ask them every day  
 “ How my kind Juliet does ; and every night,  
 “ In the severe distresses of my fate,  
 “ As I, perhaps, shall wander through the desert,  
 “ And want a place to rest my weary head on,  
 “ I'll count the stars, and bless 'em as they shine,  
 “ And court them all for my dear Juliet's safety.”

“ The reader will pardon us on this and some other occasions, that where we quote passages from plays, we give them *as the author gives them, not as the butcherly hand of a blockhead prompter may have lopped them, or as the unequal genius of some bungling critick may have attempted to mend them.* Whoever remembers the merit of the player's speaking the things we celebrate them for, we are pretty confident, will wish he spoke them *absolutely as we give them, that is, as the author gives them.*”

Perhaps it is unnecessary to inform the reader, that not one of the lines above quoted is to be found in the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakspeare. They are copied from the *Caius Marius* of Otway.

*How little Shakspeare himself was once read, &c.]*

Though

from D'Avenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised, or arbitrarily omitted. So little were the defects or peculiarities of the old writers known,

Though no author appears to have been more admired in his lifetime than Shakspeare, at no very distant period after his death his compositions seem to have been neglected. Jonson had long endeavoured to depreciate him, but he and his partisans were unsuccessful in their efforts; yet about the year 1640, whether from some capricious vicissitude in the publick taste, or from a general inattention to the drama, we find Shirley complaining that no company came to our author's performances.

—————" You see

" What audience we have; *what company*  
 " *To Shakspeare comes?* whose mirth did once beguile  
 " Dull hours, and buskin'd make even sorrow smile;  
 " So lovely were the wounds, that men would say,  
 " They could endure the bleeding a whole day;  
 " *He has but few friends lately.*"

Prologue to *The Sisters*.

After the Restoration, on the revival of the theatres, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were esteemed so much superior to those of our author, that we are told by Dryden, "two of their pieces were acted, through the year, for one of Shakspeare's." If his testimony needed any corroboration, the following lines in a *Satire* published in 1680, would afford it:

" At

known, even at the beginning of our century, that though the custom of alliteration had prevailed to that degree in the time of Shakspeare, that it became contemptible and ridiculous; yet it is made one of Waller's praises, by a writer of his life, that he first introduced this practice into English versification.

It will be expected; that some notice should be taken of the last editor of Shakspeare, and that his merits should be estimated with those of his predecessors. Little, however, can be said of a work, to the composition of which, both a large proportion of

- " At every shop while *Shakspeare's* lofty style
- " Neglected lies, to mice and worms a spoil,
- " Gilt on the back, just smoking from the press,
- " The apprentice shews you D'Urfey's *Hudibras*,
- " Crown's *Mask*, bound up with Settle's choicest labours,
- " And promises some new essay of Babor's."

See also the prologue to Shirley's *Love Tricks*, 1667.

- " In our old plays the humour, love, and passion,
- " Like doublet, hose, and cloke, are out of fashion ;
- " That which the world call'd wit in Shakspeare's age,
- " Is laugh'd at as improper for our stage."

From the instances mentioned by Mr. Steevens, he appears to have been equally neglected in the time of Queen Anne. During these last fifty years, ample compensation has been made to him for the bad taste and inattention of the periods above mentioned. MALONE.

the commentary, and various readings, is as yet wanting. *The Second Part of King Henry VI.* is the only play from that edition, which has been consulted in the course of this work; for as several passages there are arbitrarily omitted, and as no notice is given when other deviations are made from the old copies, it was of little consequence to examine any further. This circumstance is mentioned, lest such accidental coincidences of opinion, as may be discovered hereafter, should be interpreted into plagiarism.

It may occasionally happen, that some of the remarks long ago produced by others, are offered again as recent discoveries. It is, likewise, absolutely impossible to pronounce, with any degree of certainty, whence all the hints, which furnish matter for a commentary, have been collected, as they lay scattered in many books and papers, which were, probably, never read but once, or the particulars which they contain received only in the course of common conversation; nay, what is called plagiarism, is often no more than the result of having thought alike with others on the same subject.

The dispute about the learning of Shakspeare being now finally settled, a catalogue is added of those translated authors, whom Mr. Pope has thought proper to call

*The classics of an age that heard of none.*

The reader may not be displeased to have the Greek and Roman poets, orators, &c. who had been ren-  
R
dered

dered accessible to our author, exposed at one view ; especially as the list has received the advantage of being corrected and amplified by the Reverend Dr. Farmer, the substance of whose very decisive pamphlet is interspersed through the notes which are added in this revisal of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare.

To those who have advanced the reputation of our Poet, it has been endeavoured, by Dr. Johnson, in the foregoing preface, impartially to allot their dividend of fame ; and it is with great regret that we now add to the catalogue, another, the consequence of whose death will, perhaps, affect not only the works of Shakspeare, but of many other writers. Soon after the first appearance of this edition, a disease, rapid in its progress, deprived the world of Mr. JACOB TONSON ; a man, whose zeal for the improvement of English literature, and whose liberality to men of learning, gave him a just title to all the honours which men of learning can bestow. To suppose that a person employed in an extensive trade, lived in a state of indifference to loss and gain, would be to conceive a character incredible and romantick ; but it may be justly said of Mr. TONSON, that he had enlarged his mind beyond solicitude about petty losses, and refined it from the desire of unreasonable profit. He was willing to admit those with whom he contracted, to the just advantage of their own labours ; and had never learned to consider the author as an under-agent to the Bookseller. The wealth which he inherited or acquired, he enjoyed like a man conscious of the dignity

nity of a profession subservient to learning. His domestick life was elegant, and his charity was liberal. His manners were soft, and his conversation delicate : nor is, perhaps, any quality in him more to be censured, than that reserve which confined his acquaintance to a small number, and made his example less useful, as it was less extensive. He was the last commercial name of a family which will be long remembered ; and if Horace thought it not improper to convey the *SQSI* to posterity ; if rhetorick suffered no dishonour from Quintilian's dedication to *TRYPHO* ; let it not be thought that we disgrace Shakspeare, by appending to his works the name of *TONSON*.

To this prefatory advertisement I have now subjoined a chapter extracted from the *Guls Hornbook* (a satirical pamphlet written by Decker in the year 1609), as it affords the reader a more complete idea of the customs peculiar to our ancient theatres, than any other publication which has hitherto fallen in my way. See this performance, page 27.

## “ C H A P. VI.

“ *How a Gallant should behave himself in a Play-House.*

“ The theater is your poet's Royal Exchange, upon which, their muses (that are now turn'd to merchants) meeting, barter away that light commodity of words for a lighter ware than words, *plaudities* and the *breath*

of the great *beast*, which (like the threatnings of two cowards) vanish all into aire. *Plaiers* and their *factors*, who put away the stuffe, and make the best of it they possibly can (as indeed 'tis their parts so to doe) your gallant, your courtier, and your capten, had wont to be the soundest paymasters, and, I thinke, are still the surest chapmen: and these by meanes that their heades are well stockt, deale upon this comical freight by the grosse; when your *groundling* and *gallery commoner* buyes his sport by the penny, and, like a *hagler*, is glad to utter it againe by retailing.

“ Sithence then the place is so free in entertainment, allowing a stoole as well to the farmer's sonne as to your Templer: that your stinkard has the selfe same libertie to be there in his tobacco-fumes, which your sweet courtier hath: and that your carman and tinker claime as strong a voice in their suffrage, and sit to give judgment on the plaies' life and death, as well as the proudest *Momus* among the tribe of *criticks*; it is fit that hee, whom the most tailors' bills do make room for, when he comes, should not be basely (like a *vyoll*) cas'd up in a corner.

“ Whether, therefore, the gather'ers of the publique or private play-house, stand to receive the afternoone's rent, let our gallant (having paid it) presently advance himselfe up to the throne of the stage. I meane not into the lord's roome (which is now but the stage's suburbs). No, those boxes, by the iniquity of custome, conspiracy of waiting-women and gentlemen-ushers, that there sweat together, and the covetous sharers,



sharers, are contemptibly thrust into the reare, and much new satten is there dambd by being smothered to death in darknesse. But on the very rushes where the commedy is to daunce, yea and under the state of *Cambises* himselfe must our feather'd estridge, like a piece of ordnance, be planted valiantly (because impudently) beating downe the mewes and hisses of the opposed rascality.

“ For do but cast up a reckoning, what large cummings in are purs'd up by sitting on the stage. First a conspicuous eminence is gotten, by which meanes the best and most essencial parts of a gallant (good cloathes, a proportionable legge, white hand, the Persian locke, and a tollerable beard), are perfectly revealed.

“ By sitting on the stage you have a sign'd patent to engrosse the whole commodity of censure; may lawfully presume to be a girder; and stand at the helme to steere the passage of scænes, yet no man shall once offer to hinder you from obtaining the title of an insolent over-weening coxcombe.

“ By sitting on the stage, you may (without traueilling for it) at the very next doore, aske whose play it is: and by that quest of inquiry, the law warrants you to avoid much mistaking: if you know not the author, you may raile against him; and, peradventure, so behave yourselfe, that you may enforce the author to know you.

“ By sitting on the stage, if you be a knight, you may happily get you a mistresse: if a meere *Fleet-Street*

gentleman, a wife : but assure yourselfe by continuall residence, you are the first and principall man in election to begin the number of *We three*.

“ By spreading your body on the stage, and by being a justice in examining of plaies, you shall put yourselfe into such a true scænicall authority, that some poet shall not dare to present his muse rudely before your eyes, without having first unmaskt her, rifled her; and discovered all her bare and most mystical parts before you at a taverne, when you most knightly, shall, for his paines, pay for both their suppers.

“ By sitting on the stage, you may (with small cost) purchase the deere acquaintance of the boyes : have a good stoole for sixpence : at any time know what particular part any of the infants present : get your match lighted, examine the play-suits' lace, and, perhaps, win wagers upon laying 'tis copper, &c. And to conclude, whether you be a foole or a justice of peace, a cuckold or a capten, a lord-maior's sonne or a daw-cocke, a knave or an under-shriefe, of what stampe soever you be, currant or counterfet, the stage-like time will bring you to most perfect light, and lay you open : neither are you to be hunted from thence, though the scar-crowes in the yard hoot you, hisse at you, spit at you, yea, throw dirt even in your teeth : 'tis most gentleman-like patience to endure all this, and to laugh at the silly animals. But if the rabble, with a full throat, crie, away with the foole, you were worse than a madman to tarry by it : for the gentleman and the foole should never sit on the stage together.

“ Mary,

“ Mary, let this observation go hand in hand with the rest : or rather, like a country-serving man, some five yards before them. Present not your selfe on the stage (especially at a new play) untill the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got cullor into his cheekes, and is ready to give the trumpets their cue, that hees upon point to enter : for then it is time, as though you were one of the *properties*, or that you dropt of the *hangings* to creep from behind the arras, with your *stripes* or three-legged stoole in one hand, and a teston mounted betweene a fore-finger and a thumbe, in the other : for if you should bestow your person upon the vulgar, when the belly of the house is but halfe full, your apparell is quite eaten up, the fashion lost, and the proportion of your body in more danger to be devoured, then if it were served up in the Counter amongst the Poultry : avoid that as you would the bastome. It shall crowne you with rich commendation to laugh alowd in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy : and to let that clapper (your tongue) be tost so high, that all the house may ring of it : your lords use it ; your knights are apes to the lords, and do so too : your inne-a-court-man is zany to the knights, and (many very scurvily) comes, likewise, limping after it : bee thou a beagle to them all, and never lin snuffing till you have sented then : for by talking and laughing (like a ploughman in a morris) you heape *Pelion* upon *Ossa*, glory upon glory : as, first, all the eyes in the galleries will leave walking after the players, and onely follow you :

you : the simplest dolt in the house snatches up your name, and when he meetes you in the streetes, or that you fall into his hands in the middle of a watch, his word shall be taken for you : heele cry, *Hees such a gallant*, and you passe. Secondly, you publish your temperance to the world, in that you seeme not to resort thither to taste vaine pleasures with a hungrie appetite ; but onely as a gentleman, to spend a foolish houre or two, because you can doe nothing else. Thirdly, you mightily disrelish the audience, and disgrace the author : mary, you take up (though it be at the worst hand) a strong opinion of your owne judgement, and inforce the poet to take pity of your weaknesse, and by some dedicated sonnet to bring you into a better paradise, onely to stop your mouth.

“ If you can (either for love or money) provide your selfe a lodging by the water side : for above the conveniencie it brings to shun shoulder-clapping, and to ship away your cockatrice betimes in the morning, it addes a kind of state unto you, to be carried from thence to the staires of your play-house : hate a sculler (remember that) worse then to be acquainted with one ath' scullery. No, your oares are your onely sea-crabs, boord them, and take heed you never go twice together with one paire : often shifting is a great credit to gentlemen : and that dividing of your fare wil make the poore watersnaks be ready to pul you in peeces to enjoy your custome. No matter whether upon landing you have money or no ; you may swim  
in

in twentie of their boates over the river upon *ticket*: mary, when silver comes in, remember to pay trebble their fare, and it will make your flounder-catchers to send more thankes after you, when you doe not draw, then when you doe: for they know, it will be their owne another daie.

“ Before the play begins, fall to cardes; you may win or loose (as fencers doe in a prize) and beate one another by confederacie, yet share the money when you meete at supper: notwithstanding, to gul the ragga-muffins that stand a loofe gaping at you, throw the cards (having first torne foure or five of them) round about the stage, just upon the third sound, as though you had lost: it skils not if the foure knaves ly on their backs, and outface the audience, there's none such fooles as dare take exceptions at them, because ere the play go off, better knaves than they will fall into the company.

“ Now, Sir, if the writer be a fellow that hath either epigram'd you, or hath had a flirt at your mistris, or hath brought either your feather, or your red beard, or your little legs, &c. on the stage, you shall disgrace him worse then by tossing him in a blanket, or givin him the bastinado in a taverne, if in the middle of his play (bee it pastorall or comedy, morall or tragedy) you rise with a skreud and discontented face from your stoole, to be gone: no matter whether the scenes be good or no; the better they are, the worse doe you distast them: and beeing on your feete, sneake not away like a coward, but salute all your  
gentle

gentle acquaintance that are spread either on the rushes or on stooles about you, and draw what troope you can from the stage after you: the *mimicks* are beholden to you, for allowing them elbow roome: their poet cries, perhaps, a pox go with you, but care not you for that; there's no musick without frets.

“ Mary, if either the company, or indisposition of the weather, binde you to sit it out, my counsell is then that you turn plaine ape: take up a rush and tickle the earnest eares of your fellow gallants, to make other fooles fall a laughing; mew at the passionate speeches, blare at merrie, finde fault with the musicke, whewe at the children's action, whistle at the songs; and above all, curse the sharers, that whereas the same day you had bestowed forty shillings on an embroidered felt and feather (Scotch-fashion) for your mistres in the court, or your punck in the cittie, within two houres after, you encounter with the very same block on the stage, when the haberdasher swore to you the impression was extant but that morning.

“ To conclude, hoord up the finest play-scraps you can get, upon which your leane wit may most savourly feede, for want of other stuffe, when the *Arcadian* and *Euphuis'd* gentlewomen have their tongues sharpened to set upon you: that qualitie (next to your shittlecocke) is the only furniture to a courtier that's but a new beginner, and is but in his ABC of complement. The next places that are fil'd after the play-houses bee emptied, are (or ought to be) tavernes: into a tavern then let us next march, where the  
braines

braines of one hogshhead must be beaten out to make up another."

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I should have attempted, on the present occasion, to enumerate all other pamphlets, &c. from whence particulars relative to the conduct of our early theatres might be collected, but that Dr. Percy, in his first volume of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (third edit. p. 128, &c.) has extracted such passages from them, as tend to the illustration of this subject; to which he has added more accurate remarks than my experience in these matters would have enabled me to supply.

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ON THE ORIGIN  
OF THE  
*ENGLISH STAGE, &c.*

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IT is well known that dramattick poetry, in this and most other nations of Europe, owes its origin, or at least its revival, to those religious shows, which in the dark ages were usually exhibited on the more solemn festivals. At those times they were wont to represent in the churches the lives and miracles of the saints, or some of the more important stories of scripture. And as the most mysterious subjects were frequently chosen, such as the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ, &c. these exhibitions acquired the general name of MYSTERIES. At first they were probably a kind of dumb shows, intermingled, it may be, with a few short speeches; at length they grew into a regular series of connected dialogues, formally divided into acts and scenes. Specimens of these in their most improved state (being at best but poor artless compositions) may be seen among Dodsley's OLD PLAYS and in Osborne's HARLEYAN MISCEL. How they were exhibited in their most simple form, we may learn from an ancient  
novel



novel (often quoted by our old dramatic poets\*) entitled . . . . *a merry Jest of a man that was called Howleglas* † &c. being a translation from the Dutch language, in which he is named *Ulenpiegle*. Howleglas, whose waggish tricks are the subject of this book, after many adventures comes to live with a priest, who makes him his parish-clerk. This priest is described as keeping a LEMAN or concubine, who had but one eye, to whom Howleglas owed a grudge for revealing his rogueries to his master. The story thus proceeds, . . . . “ And than in the meane season, “ while Howleglas was parysh clarke, at Easter they “ should play the resurrection of our Lorde: and for “ because than the men wer not learned, nor could “ not read, the priest toke his leman, and put her in “ the grave for an Aungel; and this seeing, Howleglas “ toke to him iij of the symplest persons that were in “ the towne, that played the iij Maries; and the Person “ [i. e. Parson or Rector] played Christe, with a “ baner in his hand. Than saide Howleglas to the “ symple persons; Whan the Aungel asketh you, “ whome you seeke, you may saye, The parsons leman “ with one iye. Than it fortuneth that the tyme was “ come that they must playe, and the Aungel asked

\* See Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, Act 3. sc. 4. and his *Masque of the Fortunate Islea*. Whalley's Edit. vol. ii. p. 49. vol. vi. p. 190.

† Howleglass is said in the Preface to have died in M.cccc.l. At the end of the book, in M.cccc.l.

“ them whom they sought, and than sayd they, as  
 “ Howleglas had shewed and lerned them afore, and  
 “ than answered they, We seke the priests leman with  
 “ one iye. And than the prieste might heare that he  
 “ was mocked. And whan the priestes leman herd  
 “ that, she arose out of the grave, and would have  
 “ smyten with her fist Howleglas upon the cheke, but  
 “ she missed him and smote one of the simple persons  
 “ that played one of the thre Maries; and he gave  
 “ her another; and than toke she him by the heare  
 “ [hair]; and that seing his wyfe, came running  
 “ hastily to smite the priestes leman; and than the  
 “ priest seing this, caste down hys baner and went to  
 “ helpe his woman, so that the one gave the other  
 “ sore strokes, and made great noyse in the church.  
 “ And than Howleglas seyng them lyinge together  
 “ by the eares in the bodi of the church, went  
 “ his way out of the village, and came no more  
 “ there \*.”

As the old Mysteries frequently required the representation of some allegorical personage, such as Death; Sin, Charity, Faith, and the like, by degrees the rude poets of those unlettered ages began to form complete dramattick pieces, consisting entirely of such personifications. These they entitled MORAL PLAYS, or MORALITIES. The Mysteries were very inartificial, representing the scripture stories simply according to

\* *C. Imprinted. . . by Wyllyam Copland: without date, in 4to. black letter, among Mr. Garrick's Old Plays, K. vol. x. .*

the letter. But the Moralities are not devoid of invention; they exhibit outlines of the dramattick art: they contain something of a fable or plot, and even attempt to delineate characters and manners. I have now before me two that were printed early in the reign of Henry VIII; in which I think one may plainly discover the seeds of Tragedy and Comedy; for which reason I shall give a short analysis of them both.

One of them is entitled *Every-Man* \*. The subject of this piece is the summoning of man out of the world by death; and its moral, that nothing will then avail him but a well-spent life and the comforts of religion. This subject and moral are opened in a monologue spoken by the MESSENGER (for that was the name generally given by our ancestors to the prologue on their rude stage): then GOD † is represented; who, after some general complaints on the degeneracy of mankind, calls for DEATH, and orders him to bring before his tribunal EVERY-MAN, for so is called the personage who represents the human race. EVERY-MAN appears, and receives the summons with all the marks of confusion and terror. When Death is withdrawn, Every-man applies for relief in this distress to

\* This Play has been lately reprinted by Mr. HAWKINS in his 3 vols. of Old Plays, entitled, THE ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA, 12mo. Oxford, 1773. See vol. i, p. 27.

† The second person of the Trinity seems to be meant,

FELLOWSHIP, KINDRED, GOODS, or RICHES, but they successively renounce and forsake him. In this disconsolate state he betakes himself to GOOD-DEDES, who, after upbraiding him with his long neglect of her\*, introduces him to her sister KNOWLEDGE, and she leads him to the "holy man CONFESSION," who appoints him penance: this he inflicts upon himself on the stage, and then withdraws to receive the sacraments of the priest. On his return he begins to wax faint, and after STRENGTH, BEAUTY, DISCRETION, and FIVE WITS† have all taken their final leave of him, gradually expires on the stage; Good-Dedes still accompanying him to the last. Then an ANGEL descends to sing his *requiem*: and the epilogue is spoken by a person, called DOCTOR, who recapitulates the whole, and delivers the moral,

" This memoriall men may have in mynde,  
 " Ye herers, take it of worth old and yonge,  
 " And forsake pryde, for he disceyveth you in thende  
 " And remembre Beautè, Five Witts, Strength and  
     Discrecion,  
 " They all at last do Every-Man forsake;  
 " Save his Good Dedes there dothe he take:

\* Those above-mentioned are male characters.

† i. e. The Five Senses. These are frequently exhibited as five distinct personages upon the Spanish stage (see Riccoboni, p. 98.); but our moralist has represented them all by one character.

" But

“ But beware, for and they be small,  
 “ Before God he hath no helpe at all.” &c.

From this short analysis it may be observed, that *Every-Man* is a grave solemn piece, not without some rude attempts to excite terror and pity, and therefore may not improperly be referred to the class of tragedy. It is remarkable that in this old simple drama, the fable is conducted upon the strictest model of the Greek tragedy. The action is simply one, the time of action is that of the performance, the scene is never changed, nor the stage ever empty. *EVERY-MAN*, the hero of the piece, after his first appearance never withdraws, except when he goes out to receive the sacraments, which could not be well exhibited in publick; and during his absence *KNOWLEDGE* descants on the excellence and power of the priesthood, somewhat after the manner of the Greek chorus. And indeed, except in the circumstance of *Every-Man*'s expiring on the stage, the *Sampson Agonistes* of Milton is hardly formed on a severer plan\*.

The other play is entitled *Hick-Scorner* †, and bears no distant resemblance to comedy: its chief aim seems

\* See more of *EVERY-MAN*, in vol. ii. Pref. to B. II. Of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Note,

† *Emprynted by me Wynkyn de Worde*, no date; in 4to. black letter. This Play has also been reprinted by Mr. *HAWKINS* in his “*Origin of the English Drama*.” Vol. i, p. 69.

to be to exhibit characters and manners, its plot being much less regular than the foregoing. The prologue is spoken by **PITY** represented under the character of an aged pilgrim, he is joined by **CONTEMPLACION** and **PERSEVERANCE**, two holy men, who after lamenting the degeneracy of the age, declare their resolution of stemming the torrent. Pity then is left upon the stage, and presently found by **FREWYLL**, representing a lewd debauchee, who, with his dissolute companion **IMAGINACION**, relate their manner of life, and not without humour describe the stews and other places of base resort. They are presently joined by **HICK-SCORNER**, who is drawn as a libertine returned from travel, and agreeably to his name scoffs at religion. These three are described as extremely vicious, who glory in every act of wickedness: at length two of them quarrel, and **PITY** endeavours to part the fray; on this they fall upon him, put him in the stocks, and there leave him. Pity then descants in a kind of lyric measure on the profligacy of the age, and in this situation is found by **Perseverance** and **Contemplacion**, who set him at liberty, and advise him to go in search of the delinquents. As soon as he is gone, **Frewill** appears again; and, after relating in a very comic manner some of his rogueries and escapes from justice, is rebuked by the two holy men, who, after a long altercation, at length convert him and his libertine companion **Imaginacion** from their vicious course of life: and then the play ends with a few verses from **Perseverance** by way of epilogue. This and every  
Morality

Morality I have seen, conclude with a solemn prayer. They are all of them in rhyme; in a kind of loose stanza, intermixed with disticks.

It would be needless to point out the absurdities in the plan and conduct of the foregoing play: they are evidently great. It is sufficient to observe, that, bating the moral and religious reflection of *PITY, &c.* the piece is of a comic cast, and contains a humorous display of some of the vices of the age. Indeed, the author has generally been so little attentive to the allegory, that we need only substitute other names to his personages, and we have real characters and living manners.

We see, then, that the writers of these Moralities were upon the very threshold of real Tragedy and Comedy; and, therefore, we are not to wonder that Tragedies and Comedies, in form, soon after took place, especially as the revival of learning about this time, brought them acquainted with the Roman and Grecian models.

II. At what period of time the Mysteries and Moralities had their rise, it is difficult to discover. Holy plays, representing the miracles and sufferings of the saints, appear to have been no novelty in the reign of Henry II. and a lighter sort of interludes were not then unknown\*. In Chaucer's time "Plays of  
of

\* See Fitz-Stephens's description of London, preserved by Stow. *Londonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis scenicis, ludos habet sanctiores, representationes miraculorum;*  
*&c.*

of Miracles" in Lent, were the common resort of idle gossips \*. Towards the latter end of Henry the VIIth's reign, Moralities were so common, that John Rastel, brother-in-law to Sir Thomas More, conceived a design of making them the vehicle of science and natural philosophy. With this view he published "*A new interlude and a mery of the nature of the iiij elements, declarynge many proper points of phylosophy naturall, and of dyvers straunge landys*†, &c. It

Ec, He is thought to have written in the reign of Henry II. and to have died in that of Richard I. It is true, at the end of his book we find mentioned *Henricum regem tertium*; but this is, doubtless, Henry the Second's son, who was crowned during the life of his father, in 1170, and is generally distinguished as *Rex juvenis*, *Rex filius*, and sometimes they were jointly named *Reges Angliæ*. From a passage in his Chapter *De Religione*, it should seem that the body of St. Thomas Becket was just then a new acquisition to the church of Canterbury.

\* See Prologue to Wife of Bath's Tale, v. 338. Urry's edition.

† Mr. Garrick has an imperfect copy (Old Plays, i. vol. 3.), The Dramatis Personæ are, "The Messengere [or Prologue] Nature naturate, Humanytè. Studyous Desire, Sensuall Appetyte, The Taverner. Experyence. Ygnorance. (Also, yf ye lyste, ye may brynge in a dysgysynge.)" Afterwards follows a table of the matters handled in the interlude, Among which are "Of certeyn conclusions prouvyng the yerthe must nedes be rounde; and that it hengyth in the myddes of the fyrmament, " and



It is observable, that the poet speaks of the discovery of America as then recent ;

——“ Within this xx yere  
 “ Westwarde be founde new landes  
 “ That we never harde tell of before this,” &c.

The West-Indies were discovered by Columbus in 1492, which fixes the writing of this play to about 1510. The play of *Hick-Scorner* was, probably, somewhat more ancient, as he still more imperfectly alludes to the American discoveries, under the name of “ the Newe founde Ilonde,” sign. A. vij.

It appears from the play of *The Four Elements*, that Interludes were then very common: The profession of **PLAYER** was no less common; for in an old satire, entitled, *Cock Lorelles Bote*\*, the author enumerates all the most common trades or callings, as, “ Carpenters, Coopers, Joyners, &c. and among others, **PLAYERS**, though it must be acknowledged he has placed them in no very reputable company.

“ and that yt is in circumference above xxi M. myle.”——  
 “ Of certeyne points of cosmographie—and of dyvers  
 “ straunge regyons—and of the new founde landys and the  
 “ maner of the people.” This part is extremely curious, as it shows what notions were entertained of the new American discoveries by our own countrymen.

\* Printed at the Sun, in Fleet-Street, by W. de Worde, no date, bl. l. 4to.

“ **PLAYERS,**

“PLAYERS, purse-cutters, money-batterers,  
 “Golde-washers, tomblers, jogelers,  
 “Pardoner’s, &c.” Sign. B. vj.

It is observable, that in the old Moralities of Hick-Scorner, Every-Man, &c. there is no kind of stage direction for the exits and entrances of the personages, no division of acts and scenes. But in the moral interlude of *Lusty Juventus*\*, written under Edward VI. the exits and entrances begin to be noted in the margin†: at length, in Q. Elizabeth’s reign, Moralities appeared formally divided into acts and scenes, with a regular prologue, &c. One of these is reprinted by Dodsley.

In the time of Henry VIII; one or two dramattick pieces had been published under the classical names of Comedy and Tragedy‡, but they appear not to have

\* Described in vol. ii. Preface to Book II. The Dramatis Personæ of this piece are, “Messenger. Lusty Juventus. Good Counsaill. Knowledge. Sathan the devyll. Hypocrisie. Fellowship. Abominable-lyving [an Harlot.] God’s-merciful-promises.”

† I have also discovered some few *Exeats* and *Intrats* in the very old Interlude of the *Four Elements*.

‡ Bishop Bale had applied the name of Tragedy to his *Mystery of God’s Promises*, in 1538. In 1540, John Palsgrave, B. D. had republished a Latin comedy, called *Acolastus*, with an English version. Holingshed tells us, (vol. iii. p. 850.) that so early as 1520, the king had “a  
 “goodlie

have been intended for popular use : it was not till the religious ferments had subsided, that the publick had leisure to attend to dramattick poetry. In the reign of Elizabeth, Tragedies and Comedies began to appear in form, and could the poets have persevered, the first models were good. *Gorboduc*, a regular tragedy, was acted in 1561 \*; and Gascoigne, in 1566, exhibited *Jocasta*, a translation from Euripides, as also, *The Supposes*, a regular comedy, from Ariosto : near thirty years before any of Shakspeare's were printed.

The people, however, still retained a relish for their old Mysteries and Moralities †, and the popular dramattick poets seem to have made them their models. The graver sort of Moralities appear to have given birth to our modern TRAGEDY ; as our COMEDY evidently took its rise from the lighter interludes of

“ goodlie comedie of Plautus plaied ” before him at Greenwich ; but this was in Latin, as Mr. FARMER informs us in his late curious “ Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare.” 8vo. p. 31.

\* See Ames, p. 316. — This play appears to have been first printed under the name of *Gorboduc* ; then under that of *Ferrer and Porrer*, in 1569 ; and again, under *Gorboduc*, 1590. — Ames calls the first edition Quarto ; Langbaine, Octavo ; and Tanner, 12mo.

† The general reception the old Moralities had upon the stage, will account for the fondness of all our first poets for allegory. Subjects of this kind were familiar to every body.

that

that kind. And as most of these pieces contain an absurd mixture of religion and buffoonery, an eminent critic \* has well deduced from thence the origin of our unnatural TRAGI-COMEDIES. Even after the people had been accustomed to Tragedies and Comedies, Moralities still kept their ground: one of them entitled *The New Custom* † was printed so late as 1578: at length they assumed the name of MASQUES ‡, and with some classical improvements, became in the two following reigns the favourite entertainments of the court.

As for the old Mysteries, which ceased to be acted after the Reformation, they seem to have given rise to a third species of stage exhibition, which, though now confounded with Tragedy or Comedy, were by our first dramattick writers considered as quite distinct from them both; these were Historical Plays, or HISTORIES, a species of dramattick writing, which resembled the old Mysteries, in representing a series of historical events simply in the order of time in which they happened, without any regard to the three great unities. These pieces seem to differ from Tragedy, just as much as Historical poems do from Epick: as the *Pharsalia*

\* Bp. Warburton's *Shakspeare*, vol. v.

† Reprinted among Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. i.

‡ In some of these appeared characters full as extraordinary as in any of the old Moralities. In Ben Jonson's *Masque of Christmas*, 1616, one of the personages is MINCED PYE.

does from the *Æneid*. What might contribute to make dramattick poetry take this turn was this ; soon after the Mysteries ceased to be exhibited, there was published a large collection of poetical narratives, called *The Mirrour for Magistrates*\*, wherein a great number of the most eminent characters in English history are drawn, relating their own misfortunes. This book was popular, and of a dramattick cast, and therefore, as an elegant writer † has well observed, might have its influence in producing Historick Plays. These narratives, probably, furnished the subjects, and the ancient Mysteries suggested the plan.

That our old writers considered Historical Plays as somewhat distinct from Tragedy and Comedy, appears from numberless passages of their works. “ Of late  
“ days,” says Stow, “ instead of those stage-playes ‡  
“ have been used Comedies, Tragedies, Enterludes,  
“ and HISTORIES, both true and fained.” Survey of London ||.—Beaumont and Fletcher, in the prologue to *The Captain*, say,

“ This is nor Comedy, nor Tragedy,

“ Nor HISTORY.”——

\* The first part of which was printed in 1559.

† Catalogue of Royal and Noble authors, vol. i. p. 166, 7.

‡ The Creation of the World, acted at Skinner's-Well, in, 1409.

|| See Mr. Warton's *Observations*, vol. ii. p. 109.

Polonius, in *Hamlet*, commends the actors, as the best in the world "either for Tragedie, Comedie, " HISTORIE, Pastorall," &c. And Shakspeare's friends, Heminge and Condell, in the first folio edition of his plays, in 1623, have not only entitled their book, "Mr. William Shakspeare's Comedies, " HISTORIES, and Tragedies:" but, in their Table of Contents, have arranged them under those three several heads; placing in the class of HISTORIES, "King John, Richard II. Henry IV. 2 parts, Henry V. Henry VI. 3 parts, Richard III. and Henry " VIII."

This distinction deserves the attention of the critics: for if it be the first canon of sound criticism, to examine any work by those rules the author prescribed for his observance, then we ought not to try Shakspeare's HISTORIES by the general laws of Tragedy or Comedy. Whether the rule itself be vicious or not, is another inquiry: but certainly we ought to examine a work only by those principles, according to which it was composed. This would save a deal of impertinent criticism.

III. We have now brought the inquiry as low as was intended, but cannot quit it, without entering into a short description of what one may call the œconomy of the ancient English stage.

Such was the fondness of our forefathers for dramatick entertainments, that not fewer than NINETEEN Playhouses had been opened before the year 1633, when

when Prynne published his *Histriomastix*\*. From this writer it should seem that "tobacco, wine, and beer †" were in those days the usual accommodations in the theatre, as now at Sadler's Wells.

\* He speaks in page 492, of the playhouses in Bishopsgate-Street, and on Ludgate-Hill, which are not among the SEVENTEEN enumerated in the Preface to Dodsley's *Old Plays*.

† So, I think, we may infer from the following passage, viz. "How many are there, who according to their several qualities, spend 2d. 3d. 4d. 6d. 12d. 18d. 2s. and sometimes 4s. or 5s. at a playhouse, day by day, if coach-hire, boat-hire, tobacco, wine, beere, and such like vaine expences, which playes doe usually occasion, be cast into the reckoning?" Prynne's *Histriomastix*, p. 322.

But that Tobacco was smoked in the play-houses, appears from Taylor, the Water-Poet, in his Proclamation for Tobacco's Propagation. "Let PLAY-HOUSES, drinking-schools, taverns, &c. be continually haunted with the contaminous vapours of it; nay (if it be possible) bring it into the CHURCHES, and there choak up their preachers." (Works, p. 253.) And this was really the case at Cambridge: James I. sent a letter in 1607, against "taking Tobacco" in St. Mary's. So I learn from my friend, Mr. FARMER.

A gentleman has informed me, that once going into a church in Holland, he saw the male part of the audience sitting with their hats on, smoking tobacco, while the preacher was holding forth in his morning-gown.

With regard to the players themselves, the several companies were retainers, or menial servants to particular noblemen\*, who protected them in the exercise of their profession: and many of them were occasionally strollers, that travelled from one gentleman's house to another. Yet so much were they encouraged, that, notwithstanding their multitude, some of them acquired large fortunes. Edward Allen, master of the playhouse called the globe, who founded Dulwich College, is a known instance. And an old writer† speaks of the very inferior actors, whom he calls the  
Hirelings,

\* See the Preface to Dodsley's Old Plays.—The author of an old Invektive against the Stage, called, *A third Blast of Retrait from Plaies, &c.* 1580. 12mo. says, "Alas! that private affection should so raigne in the nobilitie, that to pleasure their servants, and to upholde them in their vanitye, they should restraine the magistrates from executing their office! . . . They [the nobility] are thought to be covetous, by permitting their servants . . . to live at the devotion or almes of other men, passing from countrie to countrie, from one gentleman's house to another, offering their service, which is a kind of beggerie. Who indæde, to speake more trulie, are become beggers for their servants. For, comonlie, the good-wil men beare to their Lordes, make them draw the stringes of their purses to extend their liberalitie." Vide page 75, 76, &c.

† Stephen Gosson, in his *Schoole of Abuse*, 1579. 12mo. folio 23, says thus of what he terms in his margin,

PLAYERS,



Hirelings, as living in a degree of splendour, which was thought enormous in that frugal age.

At the same time, the ancient prices of admission were often very low. Some houses had penny-benches; \* The "two-penny gallery" is mentioned in the prologue to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Woman-Hater*. And seats of three-pence and a groat seem to be intended in the passage of Prynne above referred to. Yet different houses varied in their prices: That play-

PLAYERS-MEN: "Over-lashing in apparel is so common a fault, that the very hyerlings of some of our Players, which stand at revirion of vi. s. by the week, jet under gentlemen's noses in sutis of silke, exercising themselves to prating on the stage, and common scoffing when they come abroad, where they look askance over the shoulder at every man, of whom, the Sunday before, they begged an almes. I speake not this, as though everye one that professeth the qualitie, so abused himselfe, for it is well knowen, that some of them are sober, discreete, properly learned, honest housholders and citizens, well thought on among their neyghbours at home." [he seems to mean EDWARD ALLEN, above mentioned] "though the pryde of their shadowes (I meane those hangbycs, whom they succour with stipend) cause them to be somewhat ill-talked of abroad."

\* So a MS. of Oldys, from Tom Nash, an old pamphlet-writer. And this is confirmed by Taylor, the Water-Poet, in his *Praise of Beggerie*, (page 99.)

"Yet have I seen a begger with his many, [sc. vermin]

"Come at a Play-house, all in for one penny."

house, called the HOPE, had five several priced seats from sixpence to half a crown\*. But the general price of what is now called the PIT, seems to have been a shilling †.

The day originally set apart for theatrical exhibition, appears to have been Sunday; probably because the first dramattick pieces were of a religious cast. During a great part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the playhouses were only licensed to be opened on that day ‡: but, before the end of her reign, or soon after, this abuse was probably removed.

The

\* Induction to Ben Jonson's Bartholomew-Fair.

† Shakspeare's Prologue to Henry VIII.—Beaumont and Fletcher's Prologue to the Captain, and to the Mad-Lover, The PIT, probably, had its name from one of the Playhouses having been a Cock-Pit.

‡ So Stephen Gosson, in his Schoole of Abuse, 1579, 12mo. speaking of the Players, says, "These, because they are allowed to play every Sunday, make iiij. or v, Sundayes, at least, every week." fol. 24.—So the Author of A Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies, "Let the magistrate but repel them from the libertie of plaieing on the Sabbath-daie, . . . . To plaie on the Sabbath is but a privilege of sufferance, and might with ease be repelled, were it thoroughly followed." page 61, 62. So again, "Is not the Sabbath of al other daies the most abused? . . . Wherefore, abuse not so the Sabbath-daie, my brethren; leave not the temple of the Lord." . . . . "Those unsaverie morsels

The usual time of acting was early in the afternoon\*, plays being generally performed by day-light†. All female parts were performed by men, no English actress being ever seen on the publick stage ‡ before the civil wars. And as for the playhouse furniture and

“ of unseemlie sentences, passing out of the mouth of a  
 “ ruffenlie plaier, doth more content the hungrie humors  
 “ of the rude multitude, and carrieth better relish in  
 “ their mouthes, than the bread of the worde, &c.”  
 Vide page 63, 65, 69, &c. I do not recollect that exclamations of this kind occur in Prynne, whence I conclude that this enormity no longer subsisted in his time.

It should also seem, from the author of the Third Blast, above quoted, that the Churches still continued to be used occasionally for theatres. Thus in page 77, he says, “ that  
 “ the Players (who, as has been observed, were servants of the nobility), “ under the title of their maisters, or as  
 “ retainers, are priviledged to roave abroad, and permitted  
 “ to publish their mametree in everie temple of God, and  
 “ that throughout England, unto the horrible contempt of  
 “ praier.”

\* “ He entertains us (says Overbury, in his character of  
 “ an Actor) in the best leasure of our life, that is, be-  
 “ tweene meales; the most unfit time either for study, or  
 “ bodily exercise.”—Even so late as in the reign of Charles II. Plays generally began at three in the afternoon.

† See Biogr. Brit. I. 117. n. D.

‡ I say “ no ENGLISH Actress—on the PUBLICK  
 “ Stage,” because Prynne speaks of it as an unusual enormity, that “ they had French-women actors in a play not  
 “ long

and ornaments, though some houses were probably more decorated than others, yet, in general, "they had no other scenes nor decorations of the stage, but only old tapestry, and the stage strewn with rushes, with habits accordingly\*:" as we are assured in a short discourse on the English stage, subjoined to Flecknoe's *LOVE'S KINGDOM*, 1674. 12mo,

"long since personated in Black-Friars Playhouse." This was in 1629, vide p. 215. And though female parts were performed by men or boys on the publick stage, yet in Masques at Court, the Queen and her ladies made no scruple to perform the principal parts, especially in the reigns of James I. and Charles I.

Sir William Davenant, after the Restoration, introduced women, scenery, and higher prices. See Cibber's *Apology for his own Life*.

\* It appears from an epigram of Taylor, the Water-Poet, that one of the principal theatres in his time, viz. The Globe on the Bankside, Southwark (which Ben Jonson calls the Glory of the Bank, and Fort of the whole Parish), had been covered with thatch till it was burnt down in 1613.—(See Taylor's *Sculler*, Epig. 22, p. 31. Jonson's *Execration on Vulcan*.)

Puttenham tells us, they used Vizards in his time, "partly to supply the want of players, when there were more parts than there were persons, or that it was not thought meet to trouble . . . princes chambers with too many folks." [*Art of Eng. Poes.* 1589. p. 26.] From the last clause, it should seem that they were chiefly used in the *Masques* at Court.

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# ADDITIONS

## TO THE ESSAY

### ON THE

## ORIGIN of the ENGLISH STAGE.

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It is not easy to ascertain the time when Plays of Miracles began in England, but they appear to have been exhibited here very soon after the conquest. Mat. Paris tells us, that Geoffery, afterwards Abbot of St. Albans, a Norman, who had been sent for over by Abbot Richard to take upon him the direction of the school of that monastery, coming too late, went to Dunstable, and taught in the abbey there; where he caused to be acted (probably by his scholars) a MIRACLE-PLAY of ST. CATHARINE, composed by himself\*. This was long before the year 1119, and probably

\* *Apud Dunestapliam . . . quendam ludum de sancta Katerina (quem MIRACULA vulgariter appellamus) fecit. Ad quæ decoranda, petiit a sacrista sancti Albani, ut sibi Capæ Chorales accommodarentur, et obtinuit. Et fuit ludus ille de sancta Katerina. Vitæ Abbat. ad fin. Hist. Mat. Paris. fol. 1639, p! 56.*—We see here that plays of Miracles were become common enough in the time of Mat. Paris, who flourished about

probably within the 11th century. The above play of **ST. CATHARINE** was, for aught that appears, the first spectacle of this sort that was exhibited in these kingdoms: and an eminent French writer thinks it was even the first attempt towards the revival of Dramatick Entertainments in all Europe; being long before the Representations of **MYSTERIES** in France; for these did not begin till the year 1398\*.

Again, the learned and ingenious historian of the council of Constance † ascribes to the English the introduction of Plays into Germany. He tells us that the Emperor having been absent from the council for some time, was at his return received with great rejoicings, and that the English fathers in particular did, upon that occasion, cause a sacred comedy to be acted before him on Sunday the 31st of January 1417; the subjects of which were: **THE NATIVITY OF OUR SAVIOUR; THE ARRIVAL OF THE EASTERN MAGI; and THE MASSACRE by HEROD.** Thence it appears, says this

about 1240. But that indeed appears from the more early account of **FITZ-STEPHENS**: see p. 134. note; see also the very correct Edition of this old writer, with valuable notes, [lately published by the Rev. Mr. **PROCK,**]  *Lond.* 1774, 4to.

\* Vid. *Abregé Chron. de l'Hist. de Fr.* par M. **HEN-AULT.** à l'an. 1179.

† M. **L'ENFANT**, vid. *Hist. du Conc. de Constance*, vol. ii. p. 440.

writer,

writer, that the Germans are obliged to the English for the invention of this sort of spectacles, unknown to them before that period.

But the fondness of our ancestors for this piece of dramattick exhibition, and some other curious particulars relating to the early history of the English stage, will appear from a large MS. containing the ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF HENRY PERCY, 5th Earl of Northumberland \*, Anno Dom. 1512. In the following Extracts from this book it will be seen that the exhibiting of the old mysteries or scripture plays entered into the stated regulations of domestick œconomy in the houses of our ancient nobility, and that it was as much the business of the Chaplain in those days to compose Plays for the family, as it is now for him to make Sermons.

I shall give the extracts in the same order in which they occur in different parts of the book, viz.

\* This MS. belongs to the present ILLUSTRIOUS DESCENDANTS of that Nobleman, who have, with their usual condescension, been prevailed on to have a small number of copies printed from this very curious and invaluable MS. (Lond. 1770. 8vo.) which shows, beyond any other monument of antiquity now extant, the almost royal state and splendour of our ancient Barons, the number of their attendants, the regulations of their household, and the whole plan of their domestick œconomy.

*Señ. I. p. 22.*

“ ITEM to be payd . . . . for Rewards of Players for  
 “ Playes playd in Christynmas by stranegers in my  
 “ house after xxd\*. every Play by estimation :  
 “ sum xxxiiij. s. iiijd †.

*Señ. V. p. 44.*

“ My Lords Chapleyns in householde vj. viz. the  
 “ Almonar, and if he be a MAKER OF INTERLUDYS,  
 “ than he to have a servant to the intent for writ-  
 “ tyng of the parts : and ells to have none. The  
 “ Maister of grammar, &c.

*Señ. XLIV. p. 340.*

“ ITEM, my lorde usith and accustomith to gyf yerely  
 “ when his lordship is at home to every Erles  
 “ PLAYERS that comes to his lordship betwixt  
 “ cristynmas and candilmas if he be his speciall  
 “ lorde and friende and kinsman—xx s.

*Ibid.*

“ ITEM, my lorde usith and accustomyth to gyf yerely  
 “ when his lordship is at home to every Lordis

\* This was not so small a sum then as it may now appear; for in another part of this MS. the price ordered to be given for a fat ox is but 13s. 4d. and for a lean one 8s.

† At this rate the number of Plays acted must have been twenty.

“ PLAYERS,



“ PLAYERS, that comyth to his lordship betwixt  
 “ cristynmas and candilmas—xs.

*ScE. XLIV. p. 343.*

“ ITEM, my lorde usith and accustomyth to gyfyerely  
 “ if his lordship kepe a chapell and be at home, them  
 “ of his lordships chapell, if they doo play the Play  
 “ of the NATIVITE uppon cristynmas day in the  
 “ mornynge in my lordis chapell before his lord-  
 “ ship—xxs.

*Ibid. p. 345.*

“ ITEM, . . . . to them of his lordships chappell and  
 “ other his lordships servaunts that doith play the  
 “ Play before his lordship uppon SHROF-TUESDAY  
 “ at night yerely in reward—xs.

*Ibid.*

“ ITEM, . . . . to them . . . . that playth the Play of  
 “ RESURRECTION upon estur day in the morn-  
 “ ynge in my lordis ‘chapell’ befor his lordshipe  
 “ —xxs.

*Ibid. p. 346.*

“ ITEM, My lorde usith and accustomyth yerely to gif  
 “ hym which is ordeyned to be the MAISTER OF  
 “ THE REVELS yerely in my lordis hous in cristinmas  
 “ for the overseynge and orderinge of his lordships  
 “ Playes, Interludes and Dresinge that is plaid befor  
 “ his lordship in his hous in the xij dayes of chris-

“ tinmas and they to have a rewarde for that caus  
 “ yerely—xxs.

*Ibid.* p. 351.

“ ITEM, My lordē usith and accustomyth to gyf every  
 “ of the Four Persons that his lordship admyted as  
 “ his PLAYERS to come to his lordship yerely at  
 “ crystynmas and at all other such tymes as his  
 “ lordship shall comande them for playing of Playes  
 “ and Interludes befor his lordship in his lordships  
 “ hous for every of their fees for an hole yere” . . . .

I shall conclude this subject with the following miscellaneous remarks.

THERE is reason to think, that about the time of the Reformation great numbers of PLAYS were printed, though few of that age are now to be found; for part of Queen Elizabeth's INJUNCTIONS in 1559 are particularly directed to the suppressing of “ Many pamphlets, PLAYS, and Ballads: that no manner of Person shall enterprize to print any such, &c. but “ under certain restrictions.” Vid. sect. 5.

With regard to the Playhouse PRICES, an ancient satirical piece called the “ Black-Booke, Lond. 1604.” 4to. talks of “ the SIXPENNY roomes in play-houses;” and leaves a legacy to one whom he calls “ Arch-tobacco-Taker of England, in ordinaries, upon “ STAGES both common and private.”—And in the “ Belman's Night-Walks, by DECKER, 1616.” 4to. I find this—“ Pay thy TWO-PENCE to a Player, in this  
 “ gallery

“gallery thou mayst sit by a harlot.” Yet small as these PRICES may now be thought, the Profession of an Actor appears to have been rather lucrative; this might be inferred from the passage quoted in page 140. (Not. d.) to which may be added the following extract from “GREENE’S Groatsworth of Wit, 1625.” 4to. (See Roberto’s Tale, Sign. D. 3. b.) “WHAT is your “profession?”—“Truly, Sir, . . . I am a PLAYER.” “A player! . . . I took you rather for a Gentleman of “great living; for if by outward Habit men should be “censured, I tell you, you would be taken for a substantial man.” “So I am where I dwell. . . . What “though the world once went hard with me, when I “was fayne to carry my playing-fardle a foot backe: “*Tempora mutantur* . . . for my very share in playing “apparell will not be sold for TWO HUNDRED pounds. “ . . . Nay more, I can serve to make a pretty speech, “for I was a country Author, passing at a MORAL, “&c.”

Lastly, with regard to the Decorations of the Stage, mean as they then were, Coryate thought them splendid compared to what he saw abroad; Speaking of the Theatre for Comedies at Venice, he says, “The “house is very beggarly and base in comparison of our “stately PLAY-HOUSES in England: neyther can “their actors compare with ours for apparell, shews, “and musicke. Here I observed certaine things that “I never saw before: For I saw WOMEN ACT, a “thing that I never saw before, though I have heard “that it hath been sometimes used in London; and

U ij

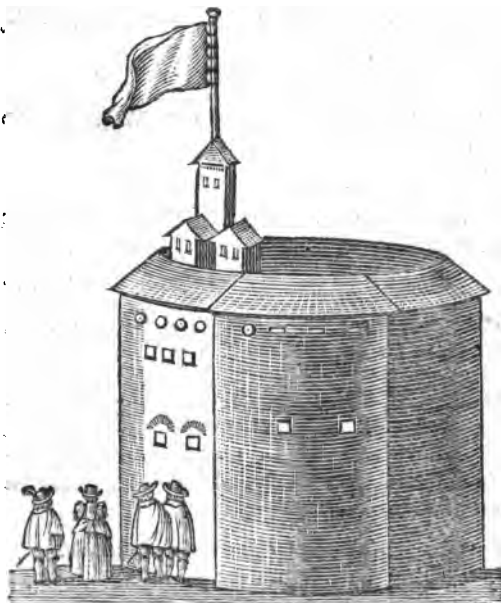
“ they

“ they performed it with as good a grace, action, gesture, and whatsoever convenient for a Player, as ever I saw any masculine Actor.” Coryate’s Crudities, 4to. 1611. p. 247.

It ought however to be observed, that amid such a multitude of PLAY-HOUSES as subsisted in the Metropolis before the Civil Wars, there must have been a great difference between their several Accommodations, Ornaments, and Prices ; and that some would be much more shewy than others; though probably all were much inferior in splendour to the two great Theatres after the Restoration.

**The GLOBE on the BANCKE SIDE, where  
SHAKSPERE acted.**

*From the long Antwerp View of London in the  
PEPYSIAN LIBRARY.*



With the drawing from which this Cut was made,  
I was favoured by the Reverend Mr. Henley.

STEEVENS,

Uij

THE

T H E

*LICENCE for ACTING,**Granted by JAMES the First to the Company at the Globe,*Extracted from RYMER's *Fœdera*,PRO LAURENTIO FLETCHER & WILLIELMO  
SHAKSPERE & *aliis*.A. D. 1603. *Pat*\*.1 Jac. P. 2. m. 4. JAMES by the grace of God  
&c. to all justices, maiors, sheriffs, constabls, head-  
boroughs,

\* Among the unpublished collections of Rymer, which are now in the British Museum, is the following patent granted in the 16th year of Q. Elizabeth, (viz. 1574). See MSS. Rymer, vol. i. The James Burbage mentioned therein was in all probability father to Richard Burbage the contemporary of Shakspeare, and chief performer in his plays. I have printed it, because perhaps it is the first regular licence ever granted to players.

*" Pro Jacobo Burbage et aliis, de licentia speciali.*

Elizabeth by the grace of God, quene of England, &c.  
To all justices, mayors, sheriffes, baylyffes, head con-  
stables, under constables, and all other oure officers and  
mynisters, gretinge,

Know

boroughs, and other our officers and loving subjects, greeting. Know you that wee, of our special grace, certaine knowledge and meer motion, have licensed and authorised, and by these presentes doe licence and authorize theise our servants Laurence Fletcher, *William Shakspeare*, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillipes, John Heminge, Henrie Condell, William Sly,

Know ye, that we of our especiall grace, certen knowledge, and mere motion, have lycensed and auctorised, and by these presents do lycence and auctorise oure lovinge subjectes James Burbage, John Perkyn, John Lanham, William Johnson, and Robert Wilson, servants to our trustie and well beloved cosen and counseyllour the Earle of Leycester, to use, exercyse and occupie the arte and facultye of playenge commedies, tragedies, enterludes, stage playes, and suche other like as they have alredie used and studied, or hereafter shall use and studie, as well for the recreation of oure lovinge subjectes as for oure solace and pleasure when we shall thinke good to see them, as also to use and occupie all suche instruments as they have alredie practised or hereafter shall practise for and duringe our pleasure; and the said commedies, tragedies, enterludes, and stage-plaies, together with their musicke, to shew, publishe, exercise and occupie to their best commoditie, during all the terme aforesaid, as well within the liberties and freedoms of anye our cities, townes, boroughs, &c. whatsoever, as without the same thoroughoute oure realme of England. Wyllinge and commaundings yowe and every of you as ye tender oure pleasure to permitt and suffer them heresin withoute anye lettes,  
hynderaunce

Sly, Robert Armin, Richard Cowly, and the rest of their associates, freely to use and exercise the arte and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, interludes, morals, pastorals, stage-plaies, and such like others as theie have alreadie studied or hereafter shall use or studie, as well for the recreation of our lovinge subjects, as well as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall thincke good to see them, during our pleasure: and the said comedies, tragedies, histories, enterludes, morals, pastorals, stage-plaies, and such like, to shew and exercise publiquely to their best commoditie, when the infection of the plague shall decrease, as well within their nowe usuall house called the Globe, within our county of Surrey, as also within anie tounne halls or moute halls, or other

hynderaunce or molestation duringe the terme aforesaid, any acte, statute, or proclamation or commaundement heretofore made or hereafter to be made notwythstandynge; provyded that the saide commedies, tragedies, enterludes and stage-playes be by the master of our revells for the tyme beyinge before sene and allowed; and that the same be not published or shewen in the tyme of common prayer or in the tyme of greate and common plague in our saide citey of London.

In wytness whereof, &c.

Wytness ourselfe at Westminster the 10th daye of Maye.

*Per breve de privato sigillo.*"

Mr. Dodsley in the preface to his collection of old plays 1744, p. 21. says, that the first company of players we have any account of in history, are the children of Paul's in 1578. STEEVENS.



convenient places within the liberties and freedom of any other citie, universitie, toun, or boroughe whatsoever within our said realmes and dominions. Willing and commanding you, and everie of you, as you tender our pleasure, not onlie to permit and suffer them herein, without anie your letts, hindrances, or molestations, during our said pleasure, but also to be aiding or assistinge to them if any wrong be to them offered, and to allow them such former curtesies as hathe bene given to men of their place and quallitie; and also what further favour you shall shew to theise our servaunts for our sake, we shall take kindlie at your handes.

In witness whereof, &c.

Witness our selfe at Westminster, the nynteenth daye of Maye.

*Per Breve de Privato Sigillo.*

NAMES

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NAMES of the original ACTORS in the Plays of  
SHAKSPERE: From the Folio, 1623.

<i>William Shakspeare.</i>	<i>Samuel Gilburne.</i>
<i>Richard Burbage.</i>	<i>Robert Armin*.</i>
<i>John Heminge.</i>	<i>William Ostler.</i>
<i>Augustine Phillips.</i>	<i>Nathan Field†.</i>
<i>William Kempe.</i>	<i>John Underwood.</i>
<i>Thomas Poope.</i>	<i>Nicholas Tooley.</i>
<i>George Bryan.</i>	<i>William Ecclestone.</i>
<i>Henrie Condell.</i>	<i>Joseph Taylor.</i>
<i>William Sly.</i>	<i>Robert Benfield.</i>
<i>Richard Cowly.</i>	<i>Robert Goughe.</i>
<i>John Lowine.</i>	<i>Richard Robinson.</i>
<i>Samuel Crosse.</i>	<i>John Shanke.</i>
<i>Alexander Cooke.</i>	<i>John Rice.</i>

It may appear singular that the name of the celebrated *Alley*n (founder of Dulwich-College) should not

\* Author of the *Two Maids of Moreclack*, Com. 1609.

† Author of *Amends for Ladies*, Com. 1639, and *Woman is a Weathercock*, Com. 1612. He also assisted Massinger in the *Fatal Dowry*. STEEVENS.

That Nathaniel Field was the author of these plays I am by no means satisfied. I think him to have been a different person. See *Dodsley's Collection of old Plays*, vol. XII. p. 350. last edition, REED.

occur

occur in this list of performers. But Alleyn was master of the *Fortune* playhouse, which he is said either to have built or rebuilt, and therefore might have no connection with other theatres where the plays of Shakspeare were exhibited. We learn, however, from Langbaine, that he had been "an ornament to Black-Friers." *John Wilson*, who appears to have acted in our author's *Much Ado about Nothing*, is likewise excluded from this catalogue; though Meres, in the Second Part of his *Wit's Commonwealth*, 1598, praising several who were "famous for extemporall verse," says, "Of our *Tarlton*, doctor Case, that learned physitian, thus speaketh in the seventh book and seventeenth chapter of his *Politikes*; *Aristoteles suum Theodoretum laudavit, quendam peritum tragædiarum actorem*; *Cicero suum Roscium*; *nos Angli Tarletonum, in cujus voce & vultu omnes jocosæ affectus, in cujus cerebro capite lepidæ facetiæ habitant*. And so is our wittie *WILSON*, who, for learning and extemporall witte in this facultie, is without compare or compeer, &c." *STREVENs*.

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A LIST OF SUCH  
*ANCIENT EDITIONS*  
 OF  
 SHAKSPERE'S PLAYS,

As have hitherto been met with by his different Editors.

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*Those marked with Asterisks are in no former Tables; and those which are marked with † I have never seen.*

- I.
  1. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Shakspeare, 1600, Thomas Fisher.
  2. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, 1600, James Roberts.
- II.
  1. *Merry Wives of Windsor*, William Shakspeare, 1602, T. C. for Aurthur Johnson.
  2. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1619, for Do.
  3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1630. T. H. for R. Meighen.
- III. *Much Ado about Nothing*, William Shakspeare, 1600. V. S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley.

- IV. 1. *Merchant of Venice*, William Shakspeare, 1600, J. R. for Thomas Heyes.  
 2. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, 1600. J. Roberts.  
 3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1637, M. P. for Laurence Hayes.  
 4. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1652, for William Leake.
- V. 1. *Love's Labour's Lost*, William Shakspeare, 1598, W. W. for Cuthbert Burbey.  
 2. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1631, W. S. for John Smethwicke.
- VI. 1. *Taming of the Shrew*, 1607, V. S. for Nicholas Ling.  
 2. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1631, W. S. for John Smethwicke.
- VII. \* 1. *King Lear*, William Shakspeare, 1608, for Nathaniel Butter.  
 2. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1608, for Do.  
 3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1655, Jane Bell.
- VIII. † 1. *King John*, 2 Parts, 1591, for Sampson Clarke.  
 2. *Do.* W. Sh. 1611. Valentine Simmes, for John Helme.  
 3. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, 1622. Aug. Matthewes, for Thomas Dewe.

† These three are only copies of the spurious plays.

- IX. 1. *Richard II.* 1597, Valentine Simmes, for Andrew Wise.  
 2. *Richard II.* William Shakspeare, 1598, Valentine Simmes, for Andrew Wise.  
 3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1608, W. W. for Matthew Law.  
 4. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1615, for Matthew Law.  
 5. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1634, John Norton.
- X. \* 1. *Henry IV. First Part*, 1598, P. S. for Andrew Wise.  
 2. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, 1599, S. S. for Do.  
 † 3. *Do.* 1604.  
 \* 4. *Do.* 1608, for Matthew Law.  
 5. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, 1614, W. W. for Do.  
 6. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1622, T-P. sold by Do.  
 \* 7. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1632, John Norton, sold by William Sheares.  
 8. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1639, John Norton, sold by Hugh Perry.
- XI. 1. *Henry IV. Second Part*, William Shakspeare, 1600, V. S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley.  
 2. *Do.* 1600. Do.

- XII. \*1. *Henry V.* 1600, Tho. Creede, for T. Millington and John Busby.  
 2. *Do.* 1602, Thomas Creede, for Thomas Pavier.  
 3. *Do.* 1608, for T. P.
- XIII. XIV. 1. *Henry VI.* William Shakspeare, 1600, Valentine Simmes, for Thomas Millington.  
 2. *Do.* William Shakspeare, W. W. for T. Millington, 1600.  
 3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, T. P.
- XV. † 1. *Richard III.* 1597, Valentine Simmes, for Andrew Wise.  
 2. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1598, Thomas Creede, for Do.  
 3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1602, Thomas Creede, for Do.  
 4. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1612, Thomas Creede, sold by Matthew Law.  
 5. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1622, Thomas Purfoot, sold by Do.  
 6. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1629, John Norton, sold by Do.  
 7. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1634, J. Norton.
- XVI. *Titus Andronicus*, 1611, for Edward White.

- XVII.** 1. *Troilus and Cressida*, William Shakspeare, 1609, G. Eld, for R. Bonian and H. Whalley, with a Preface.  
 2. *Do.* 1609, for *Do.*  
 3. *Do.* no Date, *Do.*
- XVIII.\*** 1. *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, John Danter.  
 2. *Do.* 1599, T. Creede, for Cuth. Burby.  
 3. *Do.* 1609, for John Smethwicke.  
 4. *Do.* William Shakspeare, no Date, John Smethwicke.  
 5. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1637, R. Young, for *Do.*
- XIX.** \* 1. *Hamlet*, William Shakspeare, J. R. for N. L. 1604.  
 2. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, 1605, J. R. for N. L.  
 3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1611, for John Smethwicke.  
 4. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, no Date, W. S. for *Do.*  
 5. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1637, R. Young, for *Do.*  
 6. *Do.* R. Bentley, 1695.
- XX.** † 1. *Othello*, William Shakspeare, no Date, T. Walkely.  
 2. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1622. N. O. for Thomas Walkely.  
 3. *Do.* William Shakspeare, 1630, A. M. for Richard Hawkins.  
 4. *Do.* W. Shakspeare, 1655, for W. Leake.



✍ Of all the remaining plays, the most authentick edition is the folio 1623; yet that of 1632 is not without value; for though it be in some places more incorrectly printed than the preceding one, it has likewise the advantage of various readings, which are not merely such as reiteration of copies will naturally produce. The curious examiner of Shakspeare's text, who possesses the first of these, ought not to be unfurnished with the second. As to the third and fourth impressions (which include the seven rejected plays) they are little better than waste paper, for they differ only from the preceding ones by a larger accumulation of errors. I had inadvertently given a similar character of the folio 1632; but take this opportunity of confessing a mistake into which I was led by too implicit a reliance on the assertions of others.

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### FOLIO EDITIONS.

I. Mr. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE'S *Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*. Published according to the true original Copies. 1623. Fol. Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount.

II. Do. 1632. Fol. Tho. Cotes, for Rob. Allot.

III. Do. 1664. Fol. for P. C.

IV. Do. 1685. Fol. for H. Herringman, E. Brewster, and R. Bentley.

## MODERN EDITIONS.

- Octavo, Rowe's, London, 1709, 7 Vols.  
 Quarto, Pope's, Ditto, 1723, 6 Do.  
 Duodecimo, Pope's, Ditto, 1728, 10 Do.  
 Octavo, Theobald's Ditto, 1733, 7 Do.  
 Duodecimo, Theobald's Ditto, 1740, 8 Do.  
 Quarto, Hanmer's, Oxford, 1744, 6 Do.  
 Octavo, Warburton's, London, 1747, 8 Do.  
 Ditto, Johnson's, ditto, 1765, 8 Do.  
 Ditto, Steevens's, ditto, 1766, 4 Do.  
 Crown 8vo. Capell's, 1768, 10 Do.  
 Quarto, Hanmer's, Oxford, 1771, 6 Do.  
 Octavo, Johnson and Steevens's, London, 1773,  
 10 Do.  
 Do. second Edition, ditto, 1778, 10 Do.  
 Do. third Edition, ditto, by Reed, 1786, 10 Do.  
 Duodecimo Edition; *adapted to the use of the THEATRES,*  
*and regulated from the Prompt Books, by per-*  
*mission of the managers ; printed for J. BELL,*  
*the publisher of the present Edition, 1773, 9 vols.*  
*of which Edition, in 1773, 8000 copies were*  
*printed, and have been sold, exclusive of the fol-*  
*lowing statement.*
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The reader may not be displeased to know the exact  
 sums paid to the different Editors of Shakspeare. The  
 following account is taken from the books of the late  
 Mr. Tonson.

To





Engraved in Plaster taken from the Life by Kneassell

Author Smith, Junr

EDW. CAPELL ESQ<sup>r</sup>

London Printed for John Bell British Library Strand, October 3<sup>d</sup> 1787.

To Mr. Rowe	————	£ 36	10	0
Mr. Hughes*	————	28	7	0
Mr. Pope	————	217	12	0
Mr. Fenton †	————	30	12	0
Mr. Gay ‡	————	35	19	6
Mr. Whatley §	————	12	0	0
Mr. Theobald	————	652	10	0
Mr. Warburton	————	560	0	0
Dr. Johnson	————			
Mr. Capell	————	300	0	0

Of these editions some have passed several times through the press ; but only such as vary from each other are here enumerated.

To this list might be added, several spurious and mutilated impressions ; but as they appear to have been executed without the smallest degree of skill, either in the manners or language of the time of Shakspeare, and as the names of their respective editors are prudently concealed, it were useless to commemorate the number of their volumes, or the distinct date of each publication.

Some of our legitimate editions will afford a sufficient specimen of the fluctuation of price in books.—An ancient quarto was sold for six-pence ; and the

\* For correcting the press and making an index to Mr. Rowe's 12mo. edition.

† For assistance to Mr. Pope in correcting the press.

‡ For the same services.

§ For correcting the sheets of Pope's 12mo.

|| Of Mr. Theobald's edition no less than 11,360 have been printed.

folios 1623 and 1632, when first printed, could not have been rated higher than at ten shillings each.— Very lately, one, and two guineas, have been paid for a quarto; the first folio is usually valued at seven or eight; but what price may be expected for it hereafter, is not very easy to be determined, the conscience of Mr. Fox, Bookseller, Holborn, having lately permitted him to ask no less than *two guineas* for *two leaves* out of a mutilated copy of that impression, though he had several, almost equally defective, in his shop. The second folio is commonly rated at two or three guineas.

At the late Mr. Jacob Tonson's sale, in the year 1767, one hundred and forty copies of Mr. Pope's edition of Shakspeare, in six volumes quarto (for which the subscribers paid six guineas), were disposed of among the booksellers at sixteen shillings per set. Seven hundred and fifty of this edition were printed.

At the same sale, the remainder of Dr. Warburton's edition, in eight volumes 8vo. printed in 1747 (of which the original price was two pounds eight shillings, and the number printed 1000) was sold off: viz. 178 copies, at eighteen shillings each.

On the contrary, Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition, printed at Oxford in 1744, which was first sold for three guineas, had arisen to nine or ten, before it was reprinted.

It appears, however, from the foregoing catalogue (when all reiterations of legitimate edition are taken into the account, together with five spurious ones  
printed

printed in Ireland, one in Scotland, one at Birmingham, and four in London, making in the whole thirty-five impressions) that not less than 35,000 copies of our author's works have been dispersed, exclusive of the quartos, single plays, and such as have been altered for the stage. Of the latter, as exact a list as I have been able to form, with the assistance of Mr. Reed, of Staple-Inn (than whom no man is more conversant with English publications both ancient and modern, or more willing to assist the literary undertaking of others), will be found in the course of the following pages.

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## OLD EDITIONS

O F

### *SHAKSPERE'S POEMS.*

I. SHAKSPERE'S Poems, 1609, 4to.

II. Do. 1640. 8vo. Tho. Cotes, sold by John Benson.

III. Passionate Pilgrim, Poems by Do. 1599, 8vo. small, for W. Jaggard, sold by W. Leake.

IV. Rape of Lutrece, a Poem, 1594, 4to. Richard Field, for John Harrison.

V. Do. 1598. 8vo. P. S. for Do.

VI. Do. 1607, 8vo. N. O. for Do.

VII. Do. 12mo. (Newly revised) T. S. for Roger Jackson, 1616.

VIII.

VIII. *Venus and Adonis*, a Poem, 1620, 8vo. for J. P.\*

IX. Do. 12mo. by J. H. sold by Francis Coules, 1636.

X. *The Rape of Lucrece*, whereunto is annexed the Banishment of Tarquin, by John Quarles, 12mo. 1665.

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MODERN EDITIONS.

SHAKSPERE'S Poems, 8vo. for Bernard Lintot, no date.

8vo. by Gildon, 1710.

4to. and 12mo. by Sewell, 1728.

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PLAYS ASCRIBED TO SHAKSPERE,

*Either by the Editors of the two later Folios, or by the Compilers of ancient Catalogues.*

1. *Arraignment of Paris*, 1584 †. Henry Marsh.

2. *Birth of Merlin*, 1662, Tho. Johnson, for Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh.

3. *Edward III.* ‡ 1596, for Cuthbert Burby. 2. 1599, Simon Stafford, for Do.

\* See the following Extract of Entries in the books of the Stationers' Company.

† It appears from an epistle prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia*, that the *Arraignment of Paris* was written by George Peele, the author of *King David and Fair Bethsabe*, &c. 1599.

‡ See the following Extracts from the books at Stationers' Hall.

4. Fair



4. Fair Em \*, 1631, for John Wright.

5. Locrine, 1595 †, Thomas Creede.

6. London Prodigal, 1605.

7. Merry

\* *Fair Em.*] In Mr. Garrick's Collection, is a volume, formerly belonging to King Charles I. which is lettered on the back, SHAKSPERE, vol. I. This vol. consists of *Fair Em*, *The Merry Devil*, &c. *Mucedorus*, &c. There is no authority for ascribing *Fair Em* to our author.

† The title-page of this play offers no sufficient evidence to convict Shakspeare of having been its author, as it only says, "newly set forth, overseene and corrected by W. S." Supposing W. S. to have been meant for W. Shakspeare; as the manager of a theatre, or as a friend to the author, he might have condescended to correct what his genius could not have stooped to write. This piece likewise exhibits several antiquated and affected words never used by Shakspeare; as *lore* for lesson, *stoure* for tumult, *virent* for green, and *occision* for slaughter; besides *equalize*, *rosiall*, *mavortial*, *Eos*, *Fames* (a personification of *Hunger*), *Puriphlegeton*, *macerate*, *venerean*, *suspires* (for *sighs* subst.) *frumps*, *arcane* for secret, *feer* for wife, *exequies* for obsequies, &c. It contains also a Spanish quotation and many Latin verses; and is full of those *inexplicable dumb shews* which Shakspeare has ridiculed in *Hamlet*.

Whoever was the author of *Locrine*, it could not have been printed till after the 17th of November 1595, when Queen Elizabeth entered into the 38th year of her reign, as at the conclusion of it is the following prayer for her Majesty:

"So let us pray for that *renowned Maid*,

"That *eight and thirty years* the sceptre sway'd, &c.

The

7. Merry Devil of Edmonton \*, 1608, Henry Ballard for Arthur Johnson. 2. 1617, G. Eld. for Do. 3. 1626, A. M. for Francis Falkner. 4. 1631, T. P. for Do. 5. 1655, for W. Gilbertson.

8. Mucedorus †, 1598, for William Jones. 2. 1610. for Do. 3. 1615, N. O. for Do. 4. 1639, for John Wright. 5. No Date, for Francis Coles. 6. 1668, E. O. for Do.

9. Pericles ‡, 1609, for Henry Gosson. 2. 1619, for T. P. 3. 1630, J. N. for R. B. 4. 1635, Thomas Cotes.

10. Puritan §, 1600, and 1607, G. Eld.

11. Sir John Oldcastle, 1600, for T. P.

12. Thomas Lord Cromwell, 1613, Thomas Snodham.

The story of this play is taken from Gower, or in part from the ancient romance of *Kynge Appolyn of Thyre*, which was translated from the French by Robert Copland, who had worked under Caxton. I have a copy of it printed by Wynkyn de Wode, in 1510.

\* See the following Extracts from the books at Stationers' Hall.

+ See, &c.

‡ Ben Johnson, in an ode published at the end of his *New Inn*, has the following sarcasm on this piece :

" No doubt some mouldy tale

" Like *Pericles*, and stale

" As the shrieves crusts, &c."——

§ See, &c.

13. *Two Noble Kinsmen*, 1634, Tho. Cotes, for John Waterson.

14. *Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608\*, R. B. for T. Pavyer. Do. 1619, for T. P.

## LIST OF PLAYS ALTERED FROM SHAKSPERE.

INVENIES ETIAM DISJECTI MEMBRA POETAE.

### TEMPEST.

*The Tempest*, or *The Enchanted Island*. A Comedy, acted in Dorset-Garden. By Sir. W. Davenant and Dryden. 4to. 1669.

*The Tempest*, made into an Opera, by Shadwell, in 1673. See Downes, p. 34.

*The Tempest*, an Opera taken from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1756.

### TWO GENTLEMEN of VERONA.

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. A Comedy written by Shakspeare, with alterations and additions, as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By Mr. Victor. 8vo. 1763.

### MERRY WIVES of WINDSOR.

*The Comical Gallant*, or *The Amours of Sir John Falstaff*\*. A Comedy, as it is acted at the Theatre-

\* See, &c.

Royal in Drury-Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By Mr. Dennis. 4to. 1702.

*MEASURE for MEASURE.*

*The Law against Lovers*, by Sir William Davenant. Fol. 1673.

*Measure for Measure*, or *Beauty the best Advocate*. As it is acted at the Theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; written originally by Mr. Shakspeare, and now very much altered: with additions of several Entertainments of Musick. By Mr. Gildon. 4to. 1700.

*COMEDY of ERRORS.*

An alteration of this play, under the title of *Every Body mistaken*, was acted at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields 1716, but was never printed.

*The Comedy of Errors*, altered by Mr. Hull, was acted at Covent-Garden 1779, is now printed.

*MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.*

*The Law against Lovers*. By Sir W. Davenant. Fol. 1673.

*The Universal Passion*. A Comedy, as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By James Miller. 8vo. 1737.

*LOVE's LABOUR's LOST.*

*The Students*, a Comedy altered from Shakspeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, and adapted to the stage. 8vo. 1762.

*MIDSUMMER*

## MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

*The Humours of Bottom the Weaver*, by Robert Cox. 4to.

*The Fairy Queen*, an Opera, represented at the Queen's Theatre by their Majesty's Servants. 4to. 1692.

*Pyramus and Thisbe*, a Comick Masque, by Richard Leveridge, performed at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. 8vo. 1716.

*Pyramus and Thisbe*, a Mock Opera, written by Shakspeare. Set to musick by Mr. Lampe. Performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. 8vo. 1745.

*The Fairies*, an Opera, taken from a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, written by Shakspeare, as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1755.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, written by Shakspeare, with Alterations and Additions, and several new Songs. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By Mr. Colman. 8vo. 1763.

*A Fairy Tale*, in two acts, taken from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By the same. 8vo. 1763.

## MERCHANT of VENICE.

*The Jew of Venice*, a Comedy. As it is acted at the Theatre in Little Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, by his Majesty's Servants. By George Granville, Esq. afterwards Lord Lansdowne. 4to. 1701.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

*Love in a Forest*, a Comedy. As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By C. Johnson. 8vo. 1723.

*The Modern Receipt, or A Cure for Love*. A Comedy altered from Shakspeare. The Dedication is signed J. C. 12mo. 1739.

TAMING of the SHREW.

*Sawney the Scott, or The Taming of the Shrew*; a Comedy, as it is now acted at the Theatre-Royal, and never before printed. By John Lacy. 4to. 1698.

*The Cbler of Preston*, a Farce, as it is acted at the New Theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. By Christopher Bullock. 12mo. 1716.

*The Cbler of Preston*, as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By C. Johnson. 8vo. 1716.

*A Cure for a Scold*, a Ballad-Opera, by James Worsdale, 8vo. Taken from *The Taming of a Shrew*. 8vo. 1736.

*Catharine and Petruchio*. By Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1756.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

*All's Well that Ends Well*. A Comedy, altered by Mr. Pilon, and reduced to three acts; performed at the Haymarket-Theatre 1785, but not printed.

WINTER'S

## WINTER'S TALE.

*The Winter's Tale*, a Play altered from Shakspeare. By Charles Marsh. 8vo. 1756.

*Florizel and Perdita*, by Mr. Garrick. 8vo. 1758.

*Sheepshearing, or Florizel and Perdita*, by — Dublin. 12mo. 1767.

*The Sheepshearing*, a Dramatick Pastoral. In three acts. Taken from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in the Haymarket. 8vo. 1777.

## MACBETH.

*Macbeth*, a Tragedy, with all the Alterations, Amendments, Additions, and new Songs, as it is now acted at the Duke's Theatre. By Sir William Davenant. 4to. 1674.

The Historical Tragedy of *Macbeth* (written originally by Shakspeare), newly adapted to the stage, with Alterations, as performed at the Theatre in Edinburgh. 8vo. 1753.

## KING JOHN.

*Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John*, a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden, by his Majesty's Servants. By Colley Cibber. 8vo. 1744.

## KING RICHARD II.

*The History of Richard the Second*. Acted at the Theatre-Royal under the title of *The Sicilian Usurper*: with a prefatory Epistle in vindication of the Author,

occasioned by the prohibition of his play on the stage.  
By N Tate. 4to. 1681.

*The Tragedy of King Richard II.* altered from Shakspeare, By Lewis Theobald. 8vo. 1720.

*King Richard II.* a Tragedy, altered from Shakspeare, and the style imitated. By James Goodhall. Printed at Manchester. 8vo. 1772.

#### *KING HENRY IV. Part I.*

*King Henry IV. with the Humours of Sir John Falstaff,* a Tragi-Comedy, as it is acted at the Theatre in Little Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, by his Majesty's Servants. Revived with Alterations. By Mr. Betterton. 4to. 1700.

#### *King Henry IV. Part II.*

*The Sequel of Henry IV. with the Humours of Sir John Falstaff and Justice Shallow;* as it is acted by his Majesty's Company of Comedians at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. Altered from Shakspeare by the late Mr. Betterton. 8vo. No Date.

#### *KING HENRY VI. Three Parts.*

*Henry the Sixth, the First Part, with the Murder of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester.* As it was acted at the Duke's Theatre. By John Crowne. 4to. 1681.

*Henry the Sixth, the Second Part, or the Misery of Civil War.* As it was acted at the Duke's Theatre. By John Crowne. 4to. 1681.

*Humphrey Duke of Gloucester,* a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, by his Majesty's Servants.



Servants. [A few speeches and lines *only* borrowed from Shakspeare.] By Ambrose Philips.

*An Historical Tragedy of the Civil Wars in the Reign of King Henry VI.* (being a Sequel to the Tragedy of *Humfrey Duke of Gloucester*, and an Introduction to the Tragical History of *King Richard III.*) altered from Shakspeare in the year 1720. By Theo. Cibber. 8vo. No date.

### KING RICHARD III.

*The Tragical History of King Richard III.* altered from Shakspeare. By Colley Cibber. 4to. 1700.

### CORIOLANUS.

*The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or The Fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus.* As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal. By Nahum Tate. 4to. 1682.

*The Invader of his Country, or The Fatal Resentment.* As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, by his Majesty's Servants. By John Dennis. 8vo. 1720.

*Coriolanus, or The Roman Matron*, a Tragedy, taken from Shakspeare and Thomson. As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden: to which is added the Order of the Ovation. By Thomas Sheridan. 8vo. 1755.

### JULIUS CÆSAR.

The Tragedy of *Julius Cæsar*, with the Death of *Brutus and Cassius*: written originally by Shakspeare, and since altered by Sir William D'Avenant and John Dryden, Poets Laureat; as it is now acted by his Majesty's

jesty's Company of Comedians at the Theatre-Royal. To which is prefixed the Life of Julius Cæsar, abstracted from Plutarch and Suetonius. 12mo. 1719.

The Tragedy of *Julius Cæsar*, altered, with a Prologue and Chorus. 4to. 1722.

The Tragedy of *Marcus Brutus*, with the Prologue and the two last Chorusses. 4to. 1722. Both by John Sheffield Duke of Buckingham.

### ANTONY and CLEOPATRA.

*Antony and Cleopatra*, an Historical Play, written by William Shakspeare, fitted for the stage by abridging only; and now acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane by his Majesty's Servants. By Edward Capell. 12mo. 1758.

### TIMON of ATHENS.

The History of *Timon of Athens, the Man-hater*. As it is acted at the Duke's Theatre, made into a Play, by Tho. Shadwell. 4to. 1678.

*Timon of Athens*. As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal on Richmond-Green. Altered from Shakspeare and Shadwell. By James Love. 8vo. 1768.

*Timon of Athens*, altered from Shakspeare, a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By Mr. Cumberland. 8vo. 1771.

### TITUS ANDRONICUS.

*Titus Andronicus, or The Rape of Lavinia*. Acted at the Theatre-Royal. A Tragedy, altered from Mr. Shakspeare's Works. By Edward Ravenscroft. 4to. 1687.

### TROILUS

*TROILUS and CRESSIDA.*

*Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late.* A Tragedy, as it is acted at the Duke's Theatre. By John Dryden. 4to. 1679.

*CYMBELINE.*

*The Injured Princess, or The Fatal Wager.* As it was acted at the Theatre-Royal, by his Majesty's Servants. By Tho. Durfey. 4to. 1682.

*Cymbeline, King of Great-Britain,* a Tragedy written by Shakspeare, with some Alterations. By Charles Marsh. 8vo. 1755.

*Cymbeline,* a Tragedy, altered from Shakspeare. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden, by W. Hawkins. 8vo. 1759.

*Cymbeline,* altered by Mr. Garrick in the same year.

*KING LEAR.*

*The History of King Lear,* acted at the Duke's Theatre. Revived with Alterations. By Nahum Tate. 4to. 1681.

*The History of King Lear,* as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. By George Colman. 8vo. 1768.

*ROMEO and JULIET.*

*Romeo and Juliet,* altered into a Tragi-Comedy, by James Howard, Esquire. See Downes, p. 22.

*Caius Marius,* by Thomas Otway.

*Romeo and Juliet,* a Tragedy revised and altered from Shakspeare. By Theo. Cibber. 8vo. No date.

*Romeo*

*Romeo and Juliet*, altered by Mr. Garrick. 12mo.

From the Preface to the Republication of Marsh's *Cymbeline*, in 1762, it appears that he had likewise made an alteration of *Romeo and Juliet*.

### HAMLET.

*Hamlet*, altered by Mr. Garrick, acted at Drury-Lane, 1774, but not printed.

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*LIST of DETACHED PIECES of CRITICISM  
on SHAKSPERE, his Editors, &c.*

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**A** SHORT View of Tragedy. Its original Excellency and Corruption. With some Reflections on Shakspeare and other Practitioners for the Stage. By Mr. Rymer, Servant to their Majesties. 8vo. 1693.

Remarks on the Plays of Shakspeare. By C. Gildon, 8vo. Printed at the end of the seventh volume of Rowe's edition. 1710.

An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare, with some Letters of Criticism to the Spectator. By Mr. Dennis. 8vo. 1712.

Shakspeare restored: or, a Specimen of the many Errors as well committed as unamended, by Mr. Pope, in his late Edition of this Poet. Designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the true Reading of Shakspeare in all the Editions ever yet published. By Mr. Theobald. 4to. 1726.

An Answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare in a letter to a friend, being a Vindication of the old Actors who were the publishers and performers of that Author's Plays. Whereby the Errors of their Edition are further accounted for, and some Me-

moirs of Shakspeare and the Stage History of his Time are inserted, which were never before collected and published. By a strolling Player [John Roberts]. 8vo. 1729.

Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, written by William Shakspeare. Printed for W. Wilkins in Lombard-Street. 8vo. 1736.

Explanatory and Critical Notes on divers Passages of Shakspeare's Plays, by Francis Peck. Printed with his "New Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. John Milton." 4to. 1740.

An Essay towards fixing the true Standards of Wit and Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule: to which is added, an Analysis of the Characters of an Humourist, Sir John Falstaff, Sir Roger de Coverley, and Don Quixote. [By Corbyn Morris.] 8vo. 1744.

Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth: with Remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's Edition of Shakspeare. To which is affixed—Proposals for a new Edition of Shakspeare, with a Specimen. [By Dr. Samuel Johnson.] 12mo. 1745.

A Word or two of Advice to William Warburton, a Dealer in many words. By a Friend [Dr. Grey]. With an Appendix containing a taste of William's spirit of railing. 8vo. 1746.

Critical Observations on Shakspeare: by John Upton, Prebendary of Rochester. First Edition, 8vo. 1746. Second Edition, 1748.

Essay on English Tragedy, with Remarks on the Abbé Le Blanc's Observations on the English Stage. By William Guthrie, Esq. 8vo. No date. [1747.]

An

An Inquiry into the Learning of Shakspeare, with Remarks on several Passages of his Plays. In a Conversation between Eugenius and Neander. By Peter Whalley, A. B. Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford. 8vo. 1748.

An Answer to certain Passages in Mr. W——'s Preface to his Edition of Shakspeare, together with some Remarks on the many Errors and false Criticisms in the Work itself. 8vo. 1748.

Remarks upon a late Edition of Shakspeare: with a long String of Emendations borrowed by the celebrated Editor from the Oxford Edition without acknowledgment. To which is prefixed a Defence of the late Sir Thomas Hammer, Bart. Addressed to the Rev. Mr. Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's-Inn, &c. 8vo. No date.

An Attempte to rescue that aunciente English Poet and Play-wrighte, Maister William Shakspeare, from the many Errours faulselly charged on him by certaine new-fangled Wittes; and to let him speak for himself, as right well he wotteth, when freedde from the many careless mistakings of the heedless first In-printers of his Workes. By a Gentleman formerly of Grey's-Inn. [Mr. Holt.] 8vo. 1749.

A free and familiar Letter to that great refiner of Pope and Shakspeare, the Rev. Mr. William Warburton, preacher of Lincoln's-Lun. With Remarks upon the Epistle of Friend A. E. In which his unhandsome treatment of this celebrated writer is exposed in the manner it deserves. By a Country Curate [Dr. Grey]. 8vo. 1750.

Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: with a Preface containing some general Remarks on the Writings of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1752.

The Beauties of Shakspeare: regularly selected from each Play: with a general Index digesting them under proper Heads. Illustrated with explanatory Notes, and similar Passages from ancient and modern Authors. By William Dodd, B. A. late of Clare-Hall, Cambridge. 2 Vols. 12mo. First Edition, 1752. Second Edition, 1757. Third Edition, 3 Vols. 12mo. 1782.

Shakspeare Illustrated: or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakspeare are founded, collected and translated from the original Authors, with critical Remarks. In two Volumes. [By Mrs. Lenox.] 12mo. 1753.

A third Volume with the same Title, 1754.

The Novel from which the Play of the Merchant of Venice, written by Shakspeare, is taken, translated from the Italian. To which is added, a Translation of a Novel from the Decamerone of Bocaccio. 8vo. 1755.

Critical, Historical, and Explanatory Notes on Shakspeare, with Emendations of the Text and Metre: by Zachary Grey, LL. D. 2 Vols. 1755.

The Canons of Criticism and Glossary, being a Supplement to Mr. Warburton's Edition of Shakspeare. Collected from the Notes in that celebrated Work, and proper to be bound up with it. By the other Gentleman



Gentleman of Lincoln's-Inn. [Mr. Edwards.] First Edition, 8vo. 1748. Seventh Edition with Additions, 8vo. 1765.——Remarks on Shakspeare, by Mr. Roderick, are printed at the end of this Edition.

A Revisal of Shakspeare's Text, wherein the Alterations introduced into it by the more Modern Editors and Criticks, are particularly considered. By Mr. Heath. 8vo. 1765.

A Review of Dr. Johnson's New Edition of Shakspeare; in which the Ignorance or Inattention of that Editor is exposed, and the Poet defended from the Persecution of his Commentators. By W. Kenrick. 8vo. 1765.

An Examination of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Mr. Johnson's Edition of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1766.

A Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare, containing a number of curious and ludicrous Anecdotes of Literary Biography. By a Friend. 8vo. 1766.

Observations and Conjectures on some Passages of Shakspeare. By Thomas Tyrwhitt, Esq. 8vo. 1766.

An Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare, addressed to Joseph Cradock, Esq. By the Rev. Dr. Richard Farmer. 8vo. 1767. Second Edition, 12mo. 1767.

A Letter to David Garrick, Esq. concerning a Glossary to the Plays of Shakspeare, on a more extensive Plan than has hitherto appeared. To which is added a Specimen. By Richard Warner, Esq. 8vo. 1768.

An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare, compared with the Greek and French Dramatick Poets, with some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Mons. de Voltaire. By Mrs. Montagu, 8vo. 1770. Second Edition, 1776.

The Tragedy of King Lear, as lately published, vindicated from the Abuse of the Critical Reviewers; and the wonderful Genius and Abilities of those Gentlemen for Criticism, set forth, celebrated, and extolled. By the Editor of King Lear. [Charles Jennaens, Esq.] 8vo. 1772.

Shakspeare, 4to. This piece was written by Dr. Kenrick Prescottt, and is dated Feb. 5, 1774.

Introduction to the School of Shakspeare, held on Wednesday Evenings in the Apollo, at the Devil-Tavern, Temple-Bar. To which is added, A Retort Courteous on the Criticks, as delivered at the Second and Third Lectures. 8vo. No Date, but printed in 1774.

Cursory Remarks on Tragedy, on Shakspeare, and on certain French and Italian Poets, &c. (said to have been written by Mr. Thomas.) Crown 8vo. 1774.

A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakspeare's remarkable Characters. By William Richardson, Esq. Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow. First Edition. 12mo. 1773. Second, 1774.

The Morality of Shakspeare's Drama illustrated. By Mrs. Griffith. 8vo. 1775.

Notes and Various Readings on Shakspeare, Part the First, &c. with a General Glossary. By Edward Capell, 4to. 1775.

A Letter to George Hardinge, Esq. on the subject of a Passage in Mr. Steevens's Preface to his Impression of Shakspeare. (By the Rev. Mr. Collins.) 4to. 1777. (Dr Johnson observed of this performance, that it was "a great gun without powder or ball"). On the title-page of a copy of it, presented by Mr. Capell, together with his *Shaksperiana*, to Trinity-College, Cambridge, is the following MS. Note. "Seen through the press by Mr. H——, &c. Note in p. 18, added, and the Postscript new-moulded by him. E. C." i. e. Edward Capell.

Discours sur Shakspeare et sur Monsieur de Voltaire, par Joseph Baretti, Secrétaire pour la Correspondence étrangère de l'Académie Royale Britannique, 8vo. 1777.

An Essay on the Dramatick Character of Sir John Falstaff. 8vo. 1777.

A Letter from Monsieur de Voltaire to the French Academy. Translated from the original Edition just published at Paris. 8vo. 1777.

Notes and Various Readings to Shakspeare, by Edward Capell. 3 vols. 4to.

Remarks, Critical and Illustrative, on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1783.

A Familiar Address to the Curious in English Poetry, more particularly to the Readers of Shakspeare. By Thirsites Literarius. 8vo. 1784.

A Second Appendix to Mr. Malone's Supplement to the last Edition of the Plays of Shakspeare; containing additional Observations, by the Editor of the Supplement. 8vo. 1783.

The Beauties of Shakspeare, selected from his Works. To which are added, the principal Scenes in the same Author. 12mo. 1784. Printed for Kearsley.

Essays on Shakspeare's Dramatick Characters of Richard the Third, King Lear, and Timon of Athens. To which are added, an Essay on the Faults of Shakspeare, and additional Observations on the Character of Hamlet. By Mr. Richardson. 12mo. 1784.

Dramatick Miscellanies: consisting of Critical Observations on the Plays of Shakspeare, &c. By Thomas Davies, 3 vols. 8vo. 1784.

Comments on the last Edition of Shakspeare's Plays. By John Monck Mason, 8vo. 1785.

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*EXTRACTS of ENTRIES*

ON THE

BOOKS of the STATIONERS-COMPANY.

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**A** CHARTER was granted to the Company of Stationers, on the 4th of May 1556 (third and fourth of Philip and Mary), and was confirmed by Queen Elizabeth in 1560.

The first volume of these Entries has been either lost or destroyed, as the earliest now to be found is lettered B. The hall was burnt in the Fire of London. The entries begin *July 17, 1576.*

*Feb. 18, 1582.*

Vol. B.

*M. Tottell.] Romeo and Julietta\*.*

p. 193.

N. B. The terms *book* and *ballad* were anciently used to signify dramattick works, as well as any other forms of composition; while *tragedy* and *comedy* were titles very often bestowed on novels of the serious and the lighter kind.

\* Perhaps the original work on which Shakspeare founded his play of *Romeo and Juliet*.

*April*

*April 3, 1592.*

*Edw. White.] The Tragedie of Arden of Feversham and Black Will\*.*

286

*April 18, 1593.*

*Rich. Field.] A booke entitled Venus and Adonis †.*

297 b.

Afterwards entered by ——— Harrison, sen. *June 23, 1594*: by W. Leake, *June 23, 1596*: by W. Barret, *Feb. 16, 1616*: by John Barker, *March 8, 1619*: and by J. Harrison and J. Wright, *May 7, 1626*.

OÆ.

\* This play was reprinted in 1770, at Feversham, with a preface attributing it to Shakspeare. The collection of parallel passages which the editor has brought forward to justify his supposition, is such as will make the reader smile. The following is a specimen.

*Arden of Feversham, p. 74.*

“Fling down Endymion, and snatch him up.”

*Merchant of Venice, Act V. Sc. i.*

“Peace! how the moon sleeps with Endymion!”

*Arden of Feversham, p. 87.*

“Let my death make amends for all my sin.”

*Much Ado about Nothing. Act IV. Sc. ii.*

“Death is the fairest cover for her shame.”

† The last stanza of a poem entitled, “*Mirrha, the Mother of Adonis; or Lustes Prodigies*, by William “Barksted,” 1607, has the following praise of Shakspeare’s *Venus and Adonis*.

“But

Oct. 19, 1593.

*Symon Waterson.*] A booke entitled the Tragedie  
of Cleopatra \*.

301 b.

Feb. 6, 1593.

*John Danter.*] A booke entitled a noble Roman  
History of Titus Andronicus.

304 b.

Entered also unto him by warrant from  
Mr. Woodcock, the ballad thereof.

March 12, 1593.

*Tho. Millington.*] A booke entituled the First  
Part of the Contention of the twoo famous  
Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the  
Deathe of the good Duke Humphrie, and  
the Banishment and Deathe of the Duke of  
Yorke, and the tragical Ende of the proude  
Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable  
Rebellion of Jacke Cade, and the Duke of  
Yorke's first Claime unto the Crown.

305 b.

" But stay, my Muse, in thy own confines keepe;  
" And wage not warr with so deere lov'd a neighbor;  
" But having sung thy day-song, rest and sleepe,  
" Preserve thy small fame and his greater favor.  
" His song was worthie merit (Shakspeare hee)  
" Sung the fair blossome, thou the withered tree;  
" Laurel is due to him; his art and wit  
" Hath purchas'd it; cypres thy brow will fit."

\* I suppose this to be Daniel's tragedy of Cleopatra.  
Simon Waterson was one of the printers of his other  
works.

May

May 2, 1594.

*Peter Shorte.*] A pleasaunt conceyted hystorie  
called the Tayminge of a Shrowe \*. 306 b.

May 9, 1594.

*Mr. Harrison, sen.*] A booke intituled the Ravys-  
shement of Lucrece. B. 306 b.

January 16, 1625.

*Francis Williams.*] Lucrece by Shakspeare. D. 112 b.

May 12, 1594.

*Tho. Strode.*] A booke entituled the famous Vic-  
tories of Henry the Fift, containing the ho-  
norable Battel of Agincourt †. 306 b.

May 14, 1594.

*Edw. White.*] A booke entituled the famous  
Chronicle Historye of Leire, King of Eng-  
land, and his three Daughters ‡. 307

May 22, 1594.

*Edw. White.*] A booke intituled a Winter Nyght's  
Pastime §. 307 b.

\* I conceive it to be the play that furnished Shakspeare with the materials which he afterwards worked up into another with the same title.

† This might have been the *very displeasing play* mentioned in the epilogue to the second part of King Henry IV.

‡ I suppose this to be the play on the same subject as that of our author, but written before it.

§ Query, if the *Winter's Tale*.

June



*June 19, 1594.*

*Tho. Creede.*] An enterlude entituled the Tragedie of Richard the Third, wherein is shown the Death of Edward the Fourthe, with the Smotheringe of the twoo Princes in the Tower, with the lamentable End of Shore's Wife, and the Contention of the two Houses of Lancaster and York\*. 309 b.

*July 20, 1594.*

*Tho. Creede.*] The lamentable Tragedy of Locrine, the eldest Son of K. Brutus, discoursing the Warres of the Britains, &c. 310 b.

Vol. C.

Before the beginning of this volume are placed two leaves, containing irregular entries, prohibitions, notes, &c. Among these are the following:

*Aug. 4.*

As You Like It, a book,	} to be staied.
Henry the Fift, a book †.	
Comedy of Much Ado about Nothing.	

The dates scattered over these pages are from 1596 to 1615.

\* This could not have been the work of Shakspeare, as the death of Jane Shore makes no part of his drama.

† Probably the play before that of Shakspeare.

*Dec.*

Dec. 1, 1595.

*Cuthbert Burby.*] A booke entituled Edward the Third and the Black Prince, their Warres with King John of France \*.

6

Aug. 5, 1596.

*Edw. White.*] A new ballad of Romeo and Juliett †.

12 b.

Aug. 15, 1597.

*Rich. Jones.*] Two ballads, being the first and second parts of the Widowe of Watling-Street ‡.

12 b.

Aug. 29, 1597.

*Andrew Wise.*] The Tragedye of Richard the Seconde.

Oct. 20, 1597.

*Andrew Wise.*] The Tragedie of King Richard the Third, with the Deathe of the Duke of Clarence.

25

\* This is ascribed to Shakspeare by the compilers of ancient catalogues.

† Quere, if Shakspeare's play, the first edition of which appeared in 1597.

‡ Perhaps the songs on which the play with the same title was founded. It may, however, be the play itself. It was not uncommon to divide one dramatick piece, though designed for a single exhibition, into two parts. See the *K. John* before that of Shakspeare.

Feb.

*Feb. 25, 1597.*

*Andrew Wise.]* A booke entitled the Historie of Henry the Fourth, with his Battle at Shrewsbury against Henry Hottspurre of the North, with the conceited Mirth of Sir John Falstoff.

31

*July 22, 1598.*

*James Roberts.]* A booke of the Merchaunt of Venyse, otherwise called the Jewe of Venyse. Provided that it be not prynted by the said James Roberts, or any other whatsoever, without leave first had from the ryght honourable the Lord Chamberlen. 39 b.

*Aug. 4. 1600.*

*Tho. Pavyer.]* First Part of the History of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham.

*Item,* The Second Part of the History of Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, with his Martyrdom.

63

*Aug. 14, 1600.*

*Tho. Pavyer.]* The Historye of Henry the Fifth, with the Battel of Agincourt, &c.

63

*Aug. 23, 1600.*

*And. Wise and Wm. Aspley.]* Much Ado about Nothing.

63 b.

Second Part of the History of King Henry the Fourth, with the Humours of Sir John Falstaff, written by Mr. SHAKSPEARE.

*ibid.*

Oct. 8, 1600.

*Tho. Fisher.*] A booke called a Midsomer Nyghte Dreame. 65 b.

Oct. 28, 1600.

*Tho. Heyes.*] A booke called the Booke of the Merchaunt of Venyce. 66

Jan. 18, 1601.

*John Busby.*] An excellent and pleasaunt conceited Comedie of Sir John Faulstoff and the Merry Wyves of Windsore. 78

*Arth. Johnston.*] The preceding entered, as assigned to him from John Busby. *ibid.*

April 19, 1602.

*Tho. Pavyer.*] A booke called Titus Andronicus. 80 b.

July 26, 1602.

*James Roberts.*] A booke called the Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servants. 84 b.

Aug. 11, 1602.

*Wm. Cotton.*] A booke called the Lyfe and Death of the Lord Cromwell, as yt was lately acted by the Lord Chamberleyn his servants. 85 b.

Feb. 7. 1602.

*Mr. Roberts.*] The booke of Troilus and Cressida, as it is acted by my Lord Chamberlen's men. 91 b.

June

*June 25, 1603.*

*Matt. Law.]* King Richard III.

King Richard II.

King Henry IV. First Part.

98

*Feb. 12, 1604.*

*Nath. Butter.]* That he get good allowance for the Enterlude of Henry VIII. before he begin to print it; and then procure the warden's hand to it for the entrance of yt, he is to have the same for his copy\*.

*May 8, 1605.*

*Simon Stafford.]* A booke called the tragicall Historie of King Leir and his three Daughters, as it was lately acted.

\* Though it be uncertain whether this Interlude was Shakspeare's King Henry VIII. or not, yet we have never heard of any other play, professedly written on the same subject; and have reason to think that our author's performance was produced during the reign of queen Elizabeth, on account of the compliment paid to her at the conclusion of it.

Nathaniel Butter was the publisher of Shakspeare's King Lear. The particular cautions shown concerning the licence to print the present dramattick piece, might lead us to suspect it to have been Shakspeare's, and that the sagacious Company of Stationers were of opinion that this compliment to the memory of the queen, might not prove very pleasing to her inglorious successor.

*John Wright.*] By assignment from Simon Stafford, and consent of Mr. Leake, the tragical History of King Lear, &c. provided that Simon Stafford shall have the printing of this book \*.

*ibid.*

July 3, 1605.

*Tho. Pavier.*] A ballad of a lamentable Murder done in Yorkshire, by a Gentleman upon two of his owne Children, sore wounding his Wife and Nurse, &c †.

126

Jan. 22, 1606.

*Nich. Ling.*] Romeo and Juliect.  
Love's Labour Lost.  
Taming of a Shrewe.

147

Aug. 6, 1607.

*Geo. Eldc.*] A booke called the Comedie of the Puritan Wydowe.

157 b.

Aug. 6, 1607.

*Tho. Thorpe.*] A comedycalled What You Will †. *ibid.*

Oct. 22, 1607.

*Arth. Johnson.*] The Merry Devil of Edmontons. 159 b.

\* This is the *King Lear* before that of Shakspeare.

† Query, if the play.

‡ Perhaps this is Marston's comedy of *What You Will*. I have a copy of it dated 1607. *What You Will*, however, is the second title to Shakspeare's *Twelfth Night*.

§ The *Merry Devil of Edmontons* is mentioned in the *Blacke Booke* by T. M. 1604. "Give me leave to see the *Merry Divil of Edmunton*, or *A Woman kill'd with Kindnesse*."

*Nov.*

Nov. 19, 1607.

*John Smythwick.*] A booke called Hamlett.  
The Taminge of a Shrewe.  
Romeo and Julett.  
Love's Labour Lost. 161

Nov. 26, 1607.

*Nath. Butter and John Busby.*] Mr. William Shakspeare, his Hystorie of King Lear, as it was played before the King's Majestic at Whitehall, upon St. Stephen's night at Christmas last, by his Majesties' servants playing usually at the Globe on the Bank-side. 161 b.

April 5, 1608.

*Joseph Hunt and Tho. Archer.*] A booke called the Life and Death of the Merry Devil of Edmonton, with the pleasant Pranks of Smugg the Smith, Sir John, and mine Hoste of the George, about their stealing of Venison. By T. B\*. 165 b.

May 2, 1608.

*Mr. Pavyer.*] A booke called a Yorkshire Tragedy, written by William Shakspeare. 167

\* Bound up in a volume of plays attributed to Shakspeare, and once belonging to King Charles I. but now in Mr. Garrick's collection. The initial letters at the end of this entry, sufficiently free Shakspeare from the charge of having been its author.

May 2, 1608.

- Edw. Blount.*] The book of Pericles, Prince of Tyre. 167 b.  
A book called Anthony and Cleopatra. *ibid.*

Jan. 28, 1608.

- Rich. Bonian and Hen. Whalley.*] A booke called the History of Troylus and Cressida. 178 b.

May 20, 1609.

- Thomas Thorpe.*] A booke called Shakspeare's Sonnets. 183 b.

Oct. 16, 1609.

- Mr. Welby.*] Edward the Third. 189

Dec. 16, 1611.

- John Browne.*] A booke called the Lyfe and Death of the Lord Cromwell, by W. S. 214 b.

Nov. 29, 1614.

- John Beale.*] A booke called the Hystorie of Lord Faulconbridge, bastard Son to Richard Cordelion \*. 256 b.

Feb. 16, 1616.

- Mr. Barrett.*] Life and Death of Lord Cromwell. 279

March 20, 1617.

- Mr. Snodham.*] Edward the Third, the play. 288.

\* Query, if this was Shakspeare's *King John*, or some old romance like that of *Richard Cœur de Lion*?



Sept. 17, 1618.

*John Wright.*] The comedy called *Mucedorus* \*. 293 b.

July 8, 1619.

*Nich. Okes.*] A play called the *Merchaunt of Venice*.

303

Vol. D.

Oct. 6, 1621.

*Tho. Walkely.*] The Tragedie of *Othello*, the *Moore of Venice*.

31

Nov. 8, 1623.

*Mr. Blount and Isaack Jaggard.*] Mr. William Shakspeare's Comedyes and Tragedyes, soe many of the said Copies as are not formerly entered to other men. Viz.

### COMEDIES.

The *Tempest*.

Two Gentlemen of *Verona*.

*Measure for Measure*.

The Comedy of *Errors*.

As You Like It.

All's Well that Ends Well.

*Twelve Night*.

The *Winter's Tale*.

### HISTORIES.

The Third Part of *Henry the Sixth*.

*Henry the Eighth*.

\* Bound up in a volume of plays attributed to Shakspeare, and once belonging to King Charles I. See Mr. Garrick's collection.

### TRAGEDIES.

## TRAGEDIES.

Coriolanus.

Timon of Athens.

Julius Cæsar.

Mackbeth.

Anthonie and Cleopatra.

Cymbeline, 69

June 29, 1624.

Mr. Alde.] Leire and his Daughters. D 82

Ed. Brewster and Rob. Birde.] The plays of King  
Henry the First. D 126

Dec. 14, 1624.

Mr. Pavyer.] Titus Andronicus.  
Widow of Watling-Street. 93

Feb. 23, 1625.

Mr. Stansby.] Edward the Third, the play. 115

April 3, 1626.

Mr. Parker.] Life and Death of Lord Cromwell. 120

Aug. 4, 1626,

Edw. Brewster and Rob. Birde.] Mr. Pavyer's  
right in Shakspere's plays, or any of them.

Sir John Oldcastle, a play.

Tytus Andronicus.

Hystorie of Hamblett. 127

March 1, 1627.

Rich. Hawkins.] Othello the More of Venice. 160

Jan.

*Jan. 29, 1629.*

*Mr. Meighen.] Merry Wives of Windsor.*

192

*Nov. 8, 1630.*

*Ric. Cotes.] Henrye the Fift.*

Sir John Oldcastle.

Tytus Andronicus.

Yorke and Lancaster.

Agincourt.

Pericles.

Hamblett.

Yorkshire Tragedy.

208

The sixteen plays in p. 69, were assigned by

Tho. Blount to Edward Allot, June 26,

1632.

109

Edward Allot was one of the publishers of the  
second Folio, 1632.

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MR. STEEVENS',

REMARKS ON ENTRIES

OF THE

STATIONERS-COMPANY.

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IT is worth remark, that on the books of the Stationers-Company, *Titus Andronicus*, *Venus and Adonis*, two parts of *King Henry VI.* *Lochrine*, *Widow of Watling-Street*, *King Richard II.* *King Richard III.* *King Henry IV.* &c. are the first performances attributed to Shakspere. Thus might the progress of his dramattick art be ascertained, were we absolutely sure that his productions were set down in chronological arrangement on these records of ancient publication. It may be added, that although the private interests of play-houses had power to suspend the printing of his theatrical pieces, they could not have retarded the appearance of his poems; and we may, therefore, justly date the commencement of his authorship from the time when the first of them came out, viz. his *Venus and Adonis*, when he was in the twenty-ninth year of his age. In the dedication of this poem to the earl

earl of Southampton, Shakspeare calls it "The first heir of his invention."

Of all his undisputed plays, the only one omitted on the books of the Stationers-Company, is *King John*. The same attention to secure a lasting property in the works of Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher, does not appear to have been exerted; as of the former I have met with no more than seven or eight entries, and of the latter a still less considerable number. Beaumont died in 1615, Fletcher in 1625, and Jonson in 1637. My researches, however, were not continued below the year 1632, the date of the second folio edition of Shakspeare.

Let it, likewise, be added to the praises of our author, that, if he did not begin to write till 1593, nor ceased till within three years of his death, which happened in 1616, in the course of twenty years he had produced no less than thirty-five plays, admitting that eight others (among which is to be reckoned *Titus Andronicus*\*) were spurious. I seize this opportunity, however, to express my doubts concerning all but the last mentioned piece, and *Lochrine*. *Lochrine* has only the letters W. S. prefixed to it, and exhibits internal proofs that it was not only the composition of a scholar, but of a pedant. See a note to the *List of Plays ascribed to Shakspeare by the Editors of the two later folios, or the Compilers of Ancient Catalogues*, where the same assertion is more fully supported. See also

\* See the notes on this play.

another Note at the beginning of *Troilus and Cressida*. Neither has it ever yet been sufficiently proved, that it was once customary to set the names of celebrated living authors at full length in the title-pages to the works of others, or to enter them, under these false colours, in the Books at Stationers-Hall. Such frauds, indeed, have been attempted at a later period, but with little success. The most inconsiderable of all the pieces rejected by the editors of Shakspeare, is the *Forkshire Tragedy*; and yet, in 1608, it was both registered and published with his name. At this time too, he was probably in London, presiding at the Globe theatre, in consequence of the licence granted by K. James I. to him and his fellow-comedians in 1603. The *Forkshire Tragedy* is only one out of four short dramas which were exhibited for the entertainment of a single evening, as the title-page informs us; and, perhaps, would have been forgotten with the other three, but that it was known to have been the work of our celebrated author. Such miscellaneous representations were not uncommon, and the reader will find a specimen of them in the tenth volume of Mr. Seaward's edition of Beaumont and Fletcher. Shakspeare, who has expressed such a solicitude, that his *clowns should speak no more than was set down for them*, would naturally have taken some opportunity to shew his impatience at being rendered answerable, in a still more decisive manner, for entire compositions which were not his own. It is possible, likewise, that the copies of the plays omitted in the first folio,

had been already disposed of to proprietors, out of whose hands they could not be redeemed; or if Heminge and Condell were discerning friends to the reputation of their associate, conscious as they might have been that such pieces were his, they would have omitted them by design, as inferior to his other productions. From this inferiority, and from a cast of style occasionally different, nothing relative to their authenticity can, with exactness, be inferred; for, as Dr. Johnson very justly observes on a similar occasion, "There is little resemblance between the first works of Raphael and the last." But could it even be proved, that these rejected pieces were not among the earliest effusions of Shakspeare, such proof would by no means affect their authenticity, as both *Dryden* and *Roue*, after having written their best plays, are known to have produced others, which reflect a very considerable degree of honour on their memory.

It has hitherto been usual to represent the ancient quartos of our author as by far more incorrect than those of his contemporaries; but I fear that this representation has been continued by many of us, with a design to magnify our own services, rather than to exhibit a true state of the question. The reason why we have discovered a greater proportion of errors in the former than in the latter, is, because we have sought after them with a greater degree of diligence; for let it be remembered, that it was no more the practice of other writers than of Shakspeare, to correct the press for themselves. Ben Jonson only (who,

Being versed in the learned languages, had been taught the value of accuracy) appears to have superintended the publication of his own dramatick pieces; But were those of Lily, Chapman, Marlow, or the Heywoods, to be revised with equal industry, an editor would meet with as frequent opportunities for the exertion of his critical abilities, as in these quartos, which have been so repeatedly censured by those who never took the pains to collate them, or justify the many valuable readings they contain; for when the character of them which we have handed down, was originally given, among typographical blunders, &c. were enumerated all terms and expressions which were not strictly grammatical, or not easily understood. As yet we had employed in our attempts at explanation only such materials as casual reading had supplied; but how much more is requisite for the complete explanation of an early writer, the last edition of the *Canterbury Tales of Chaucer* may prove a sufficient witness; a work which, in respect of accuracy and learning, is without a rival, at least in any commentary on an English poet. The reader will forgive me, if I desert my subject for a moment, while I express an ardent wish, that the same editor may find leisure and inclination to afford us the means of reading the other works of the father of our poetry, with advantages which we cannot derive from the efforts of those who have less deeply and successfully penetrated into the recesses of ancient Italian, French, and English literature.—An author has received the



highest mark of distinction, when he has engaged the services of such a commentator.

The reader may, perhaps, be desirous to know, by whom these quartos of Shakspeare are supposed to have been sent into the world. To such a curiosity no very adequate gratification can be afforded; but yet it may be observed, that as these elder copies possess many advantages over those in the subsequent folio, we should decide perversely were we to pronounce them spurious. They were, in all probability, issued out by some performer, who, deriving no benefit from the theatre, except his salary, was uninterested in that retention of copies, which was the chief concern of our ancient managers. We may suppose too, that there was nothing criminal in his proceeding; as some of the persons whose names appear before these publications, are known to have filled the highest offices in the company of Stationers with reputation, bequeathing legacies of considerable value to it at their decease. Neither do I discover why the first manuscripts, delivered by so careless a writer to the actors, should prove less correct than those which he happened to leave behind him, unprepared for the press, in the possession of the same fraternity. On the contrary, after his plays had past for twenty years through the hands of a succession of ignorant transcribers, they were more likely to become maimed and corrupted, than when they were printed from papers less remote from the originals. It is true, that *Heminge* and *Condell* have called these

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copies *surreptitious*; but this was probably said with a view to enhance the value of their own impression, as well as to revenge themselves, as far as possible, on those who had in part anticipated the publication of works from which they expected considerable gleanings of advantage, after their first harvest on the stage was over.—I mean to except from this general character of the quartos, the author's rough draughts of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Romeo and Juliet*; together with the play of *King Henry V.* and the two parts of *King Henry VI.* for these latter carry all the marks of having been imperfectly taken down by the ear, without any assistance from the originals belonging to the playhouses in which they were first represented.

A preceding table of those ancient copies of the plays of Shakspeare, which his commentators have really met with and consulted, if compared with the earliest of these entries on the books already mentioned, may tempt the reader to suppose that some quartos have not yet been found; from which future assistance may be derived. But I fear that no such resources remain; as it seems to have been the practice of the numerous theatres in the time of Shakspeare, to cause some Bookseller to make immediate entries of their new pieces, as a security against the encroachments of their rivals, who always considered themselves as justified in the exhibition of such dramas as had been enfranchised by the press. Imperfect copies, but for these precautions, might have been more frequently

frequently obtained from the repetition of hungry actors, invited for that purpose to a tavern; or something like a play might have been collected by attentive auditors, who made it their business to attend succeeding representations with a like design\*. By these means, without any intent of hasty publication, one company of players was studious to prevent the trespasses of another†. Nor did their policy conclude here; for I have not unfrequently met with registers of both tragedies and comedies, of which the titles were at some other time to be declared. Thus, July 26, 1576, John Hunter enters "A new and pleasant comedie or plaie, after the manner of Common Condycyons;" and one Fielder, in Sept. 1581, prefers his right to four others, "Whereof he will bring the titles." "The famous Tragedy of the Rich Jewe of Malta," by Christopher Marlow, is ascertained to be the property of Nich. Ling and Tho. Millington, in May 1594, though it was not printed by Nich. Vavasour till 1633, as Tho. Heywood, who wrote the preface to it, informs us. In this manner the contending theatres (seventeen in

\* See the notes of Mr. Collins and Mr. Malone at the end of the third part of K. Henry VI.

† From the year 1570 to the year 1629, when the playhouse in White-Friars was finished, it appears that no less than seventeen theatres had been built.

number \*) were prepared to assert a priority of title to any copies of dramattick performances; and thus were they assisted by our ancient Stationers, who strengthened every claim of literary property, by entries secured in a manner which was then supposed to be obligatory and legal.

I may add, that the difficulty of procuring licences was another reason why some theatrical publications were retarded, and others entirely suppressed. As we cannot now discover the motives which influenced the conduct of former Lord Chamberlains and Bishops, who

\* Mr. Dodsley, in a note to the preface to his collection of *Old Plays*, has the following enumeration of the different theatres which had been built between the years 1570 and 1629, when that in White-Friars was finished:—"St. Paul's Singing-School. The Globe on the Bank-Side, Southwark. The Swan and the Hope there. The Fortune, between Whitecross-Street and Golding-Lane, which Maitland tells us was the first playhouse erected in London. The Red-Bull in St. John's-Street. The Cross-Keys in Gracechurch-Street. The Tuns. The Theater. The Curtain. The Nursery in Barbican. One in Black-Friars. One in White-Friars. One in Salisbury-Court. The Cockpit, and the Phoenix in Drury-Lane."

To this account I may subjoin, that the *Fortune* (as appears from the following advertisement in the *Mercurius Politicus*, Tuesday, Feb. 14, to Tuesday 21, 1661) must have been a place of considerable extent; and it is by no means improbable, that all the actors resided within its precincts.

who stopped the sale of several works, which, nevertheless, have escaped into the world, and appear to be of the most innocent nature, we may be tempted to regard their severity as rather dictated by jealousy and caprice, than by judgment and impartiality. See a note to my *Advertisement* which follows Dr. Johnson's Preface.

The publick is now in possession of as accurate an account of the dates, &c. of Shakspeare's works, as perhaps will ever be compiled. This was by far the most irksome part of my undertaking, though facilitated, as much as possible, by the kindness of Mr. Longman, of Paternoster-Row, who readily furnished me with the three earliest volumes of the records of

precincts. "The *Fortune* playhouse, situate between Whitecross-Street and Golding-Lane, in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, with the ground thereunto belonging, is to be lett to be built upon; where 23 tenements may be erected, with gardens; and a street may be cut through for the better accommodation of the buildings." The *Curtain* was in Shoreditch, a part of which district still retains the name of *The Curtain*. The original sign hung out at this theatre was the painting of a *striped Curtain*. We learn, likewise, from Prynne's *Histriomastix*, that in the time of Queen Elizabeth there were two other playhouses, the one called the *Bell-Savage* (situated, very probably, on Ludgate-Hill), the other in Bishopsgate-Street; and Taylor, the Water-Poet, in "The true Cause of the Watermen's Suit concerning Players, 1613," mentions another theatre called the *Rose*.

the Stationers-Company, together with accommodations which rendered the perusal of them convenient to me, though troublesome to himself.

Mr. Malone has attempted, in the following pages, to ascertain the chronological order in which the plays of Shakspeare were written. By the aid of the registers at Stationers-Hall, and such internal evidence as the pieces themselves supply, he has so happily accomplished his undertaking, that he only leaves me the power to thank him for an arrangement which I profess my inability either to dispute or to improve.

STEEVENS.

